



THE ADVENTURES  
OF A  
CIVIL  
ENGINEER

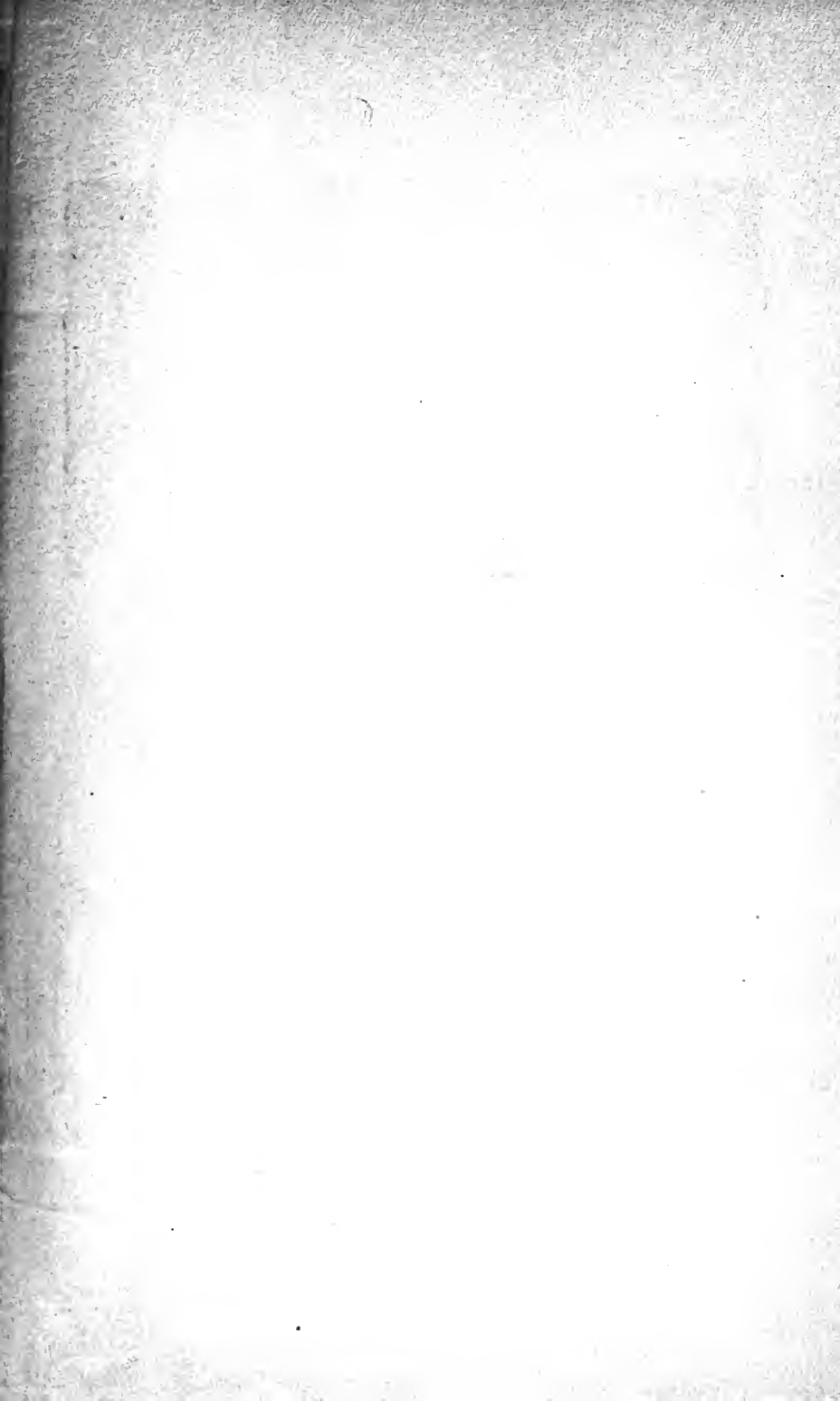
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FIVE CONTINENTS

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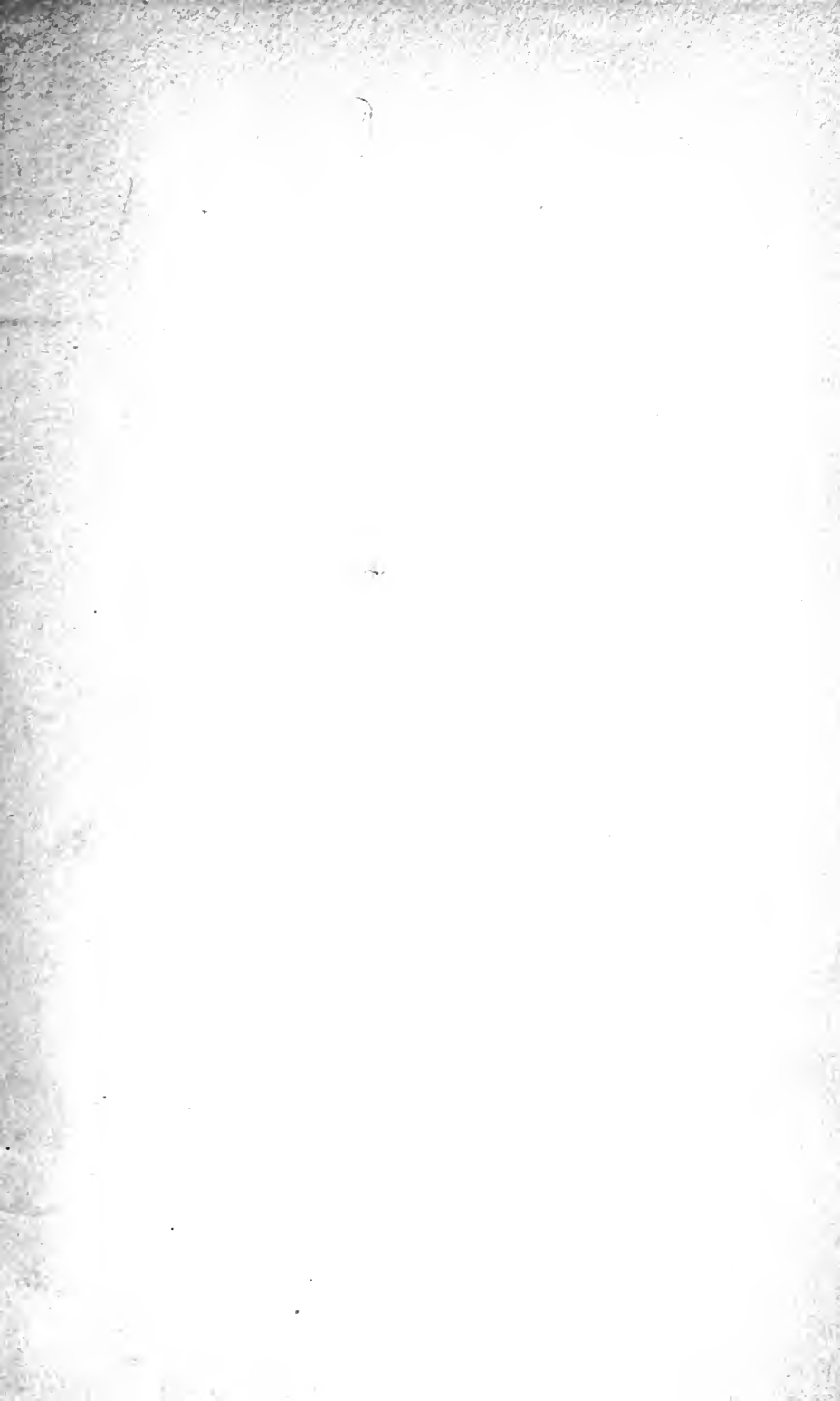
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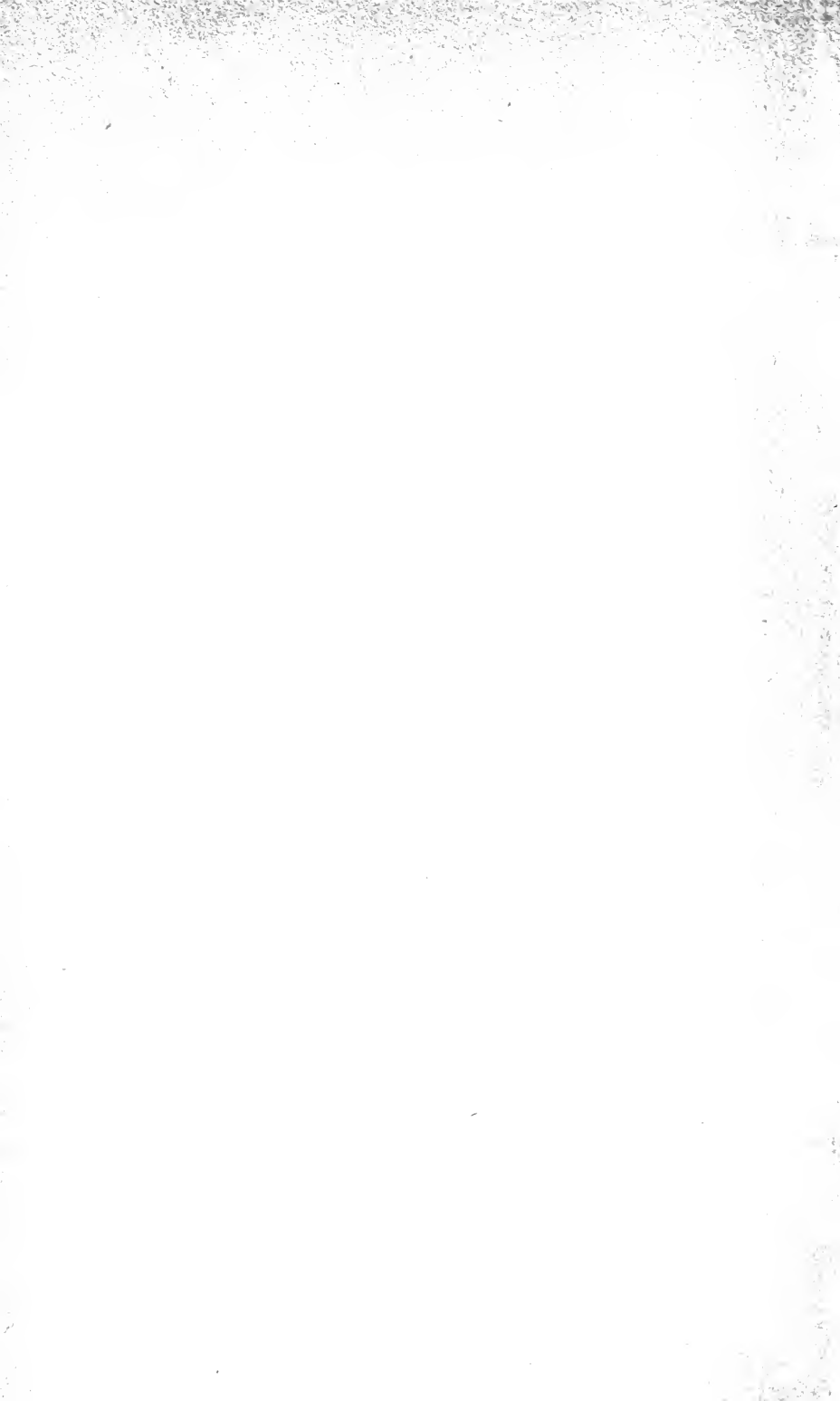
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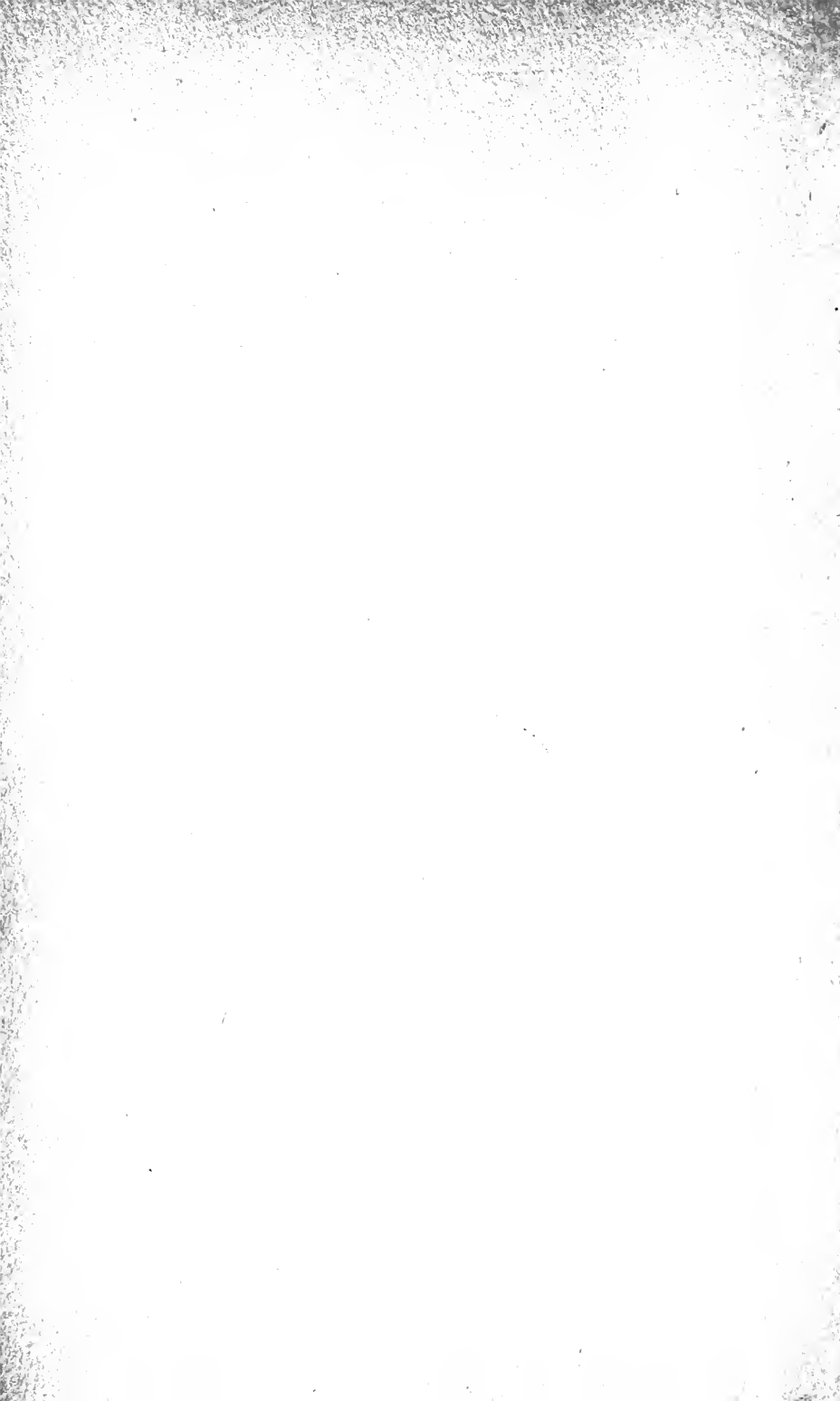


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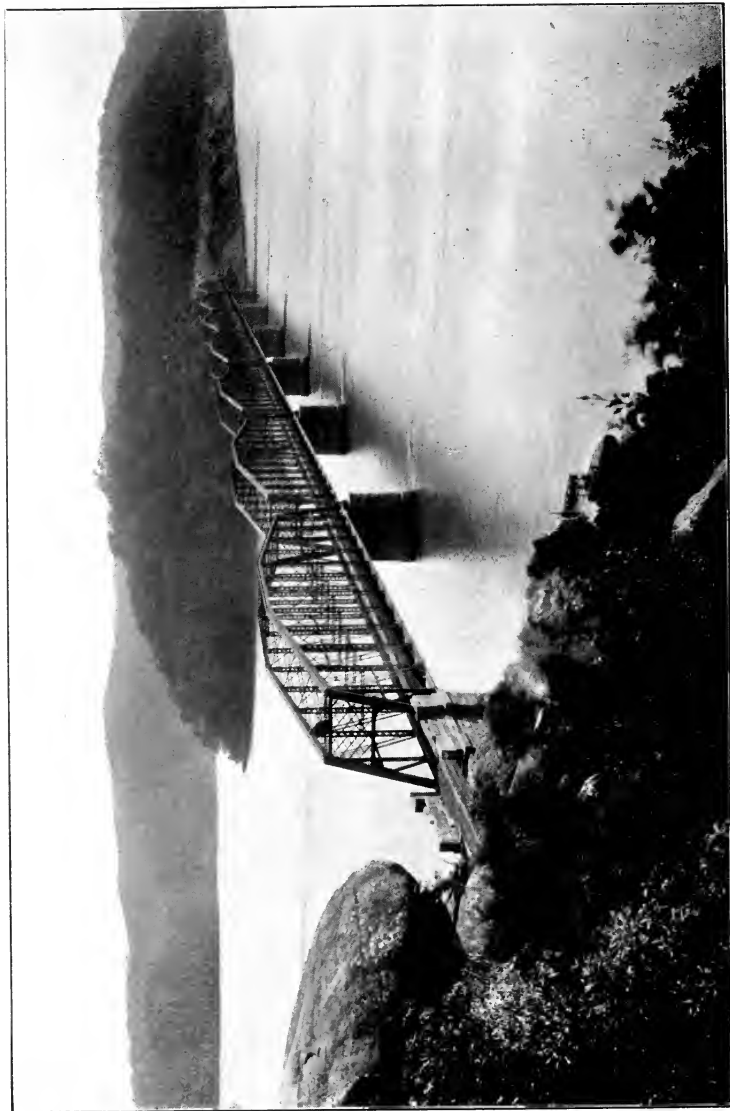


**THE ADVENTURES  
OF A CIVIL ENGINEER**









HAWKESBURY BRIDGE, N.S.W.

# THE ADVENTURES OF A CIVIL ENGINEER

FIFTY YEARS ON FIVE CONTINENTS

BY

C. O. BURGE

MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTION OF CIVIL ENGINEERS

NIHIL EST APTIUS AD DELECTATIONEM LECTORIS QUAM TEMPORUM  
VARIETATES FORTUNÆQUE VICISSITUDINES

*CICERO*



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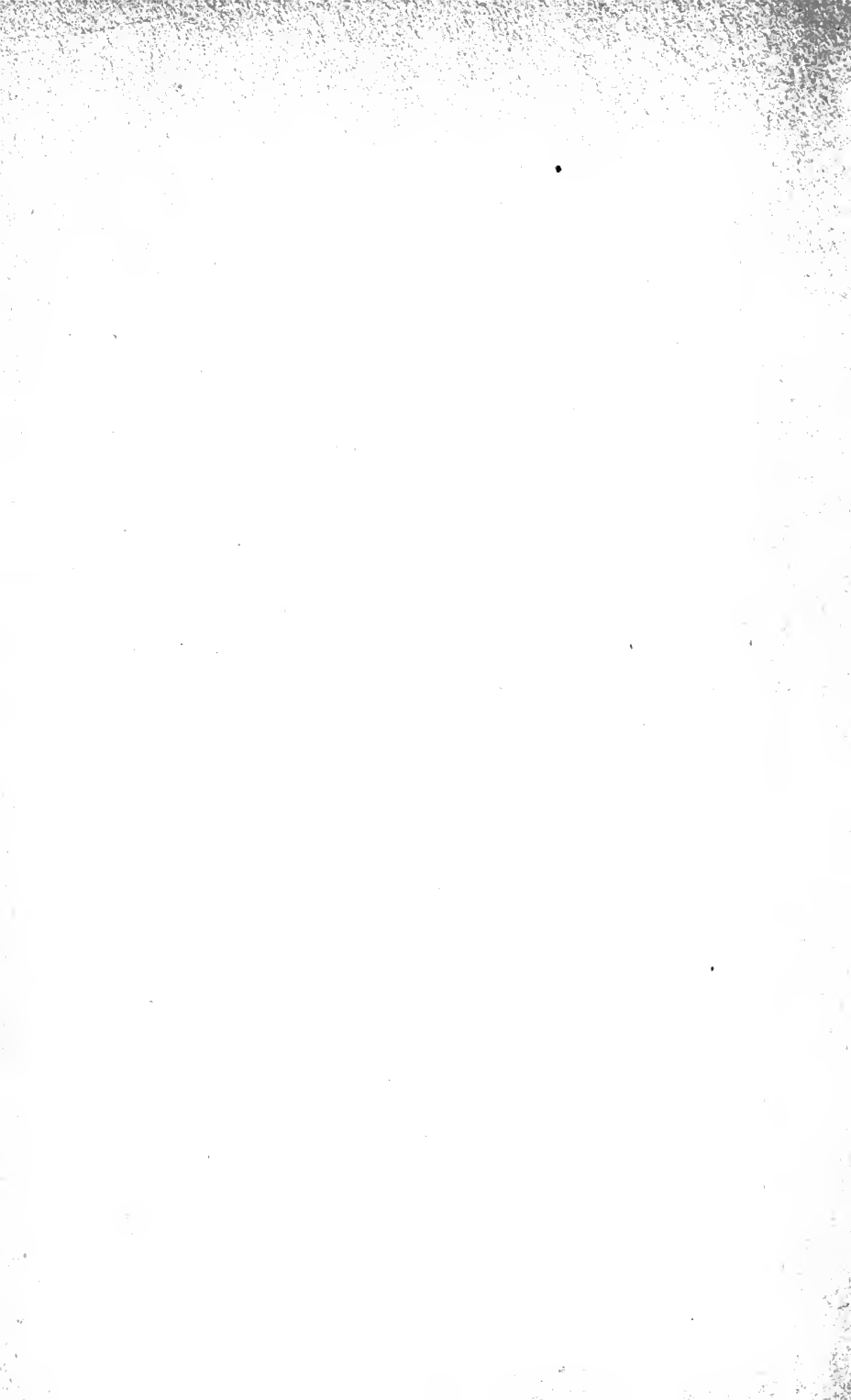
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## NOTE

**A** FEW of the incidents mentioned in this book have already been described in *Dalgety's Review*, the *West London Observer*, and in the *Evening News* of Sydney, New South Wales, the editors of which have courteously allowed their reproduction.



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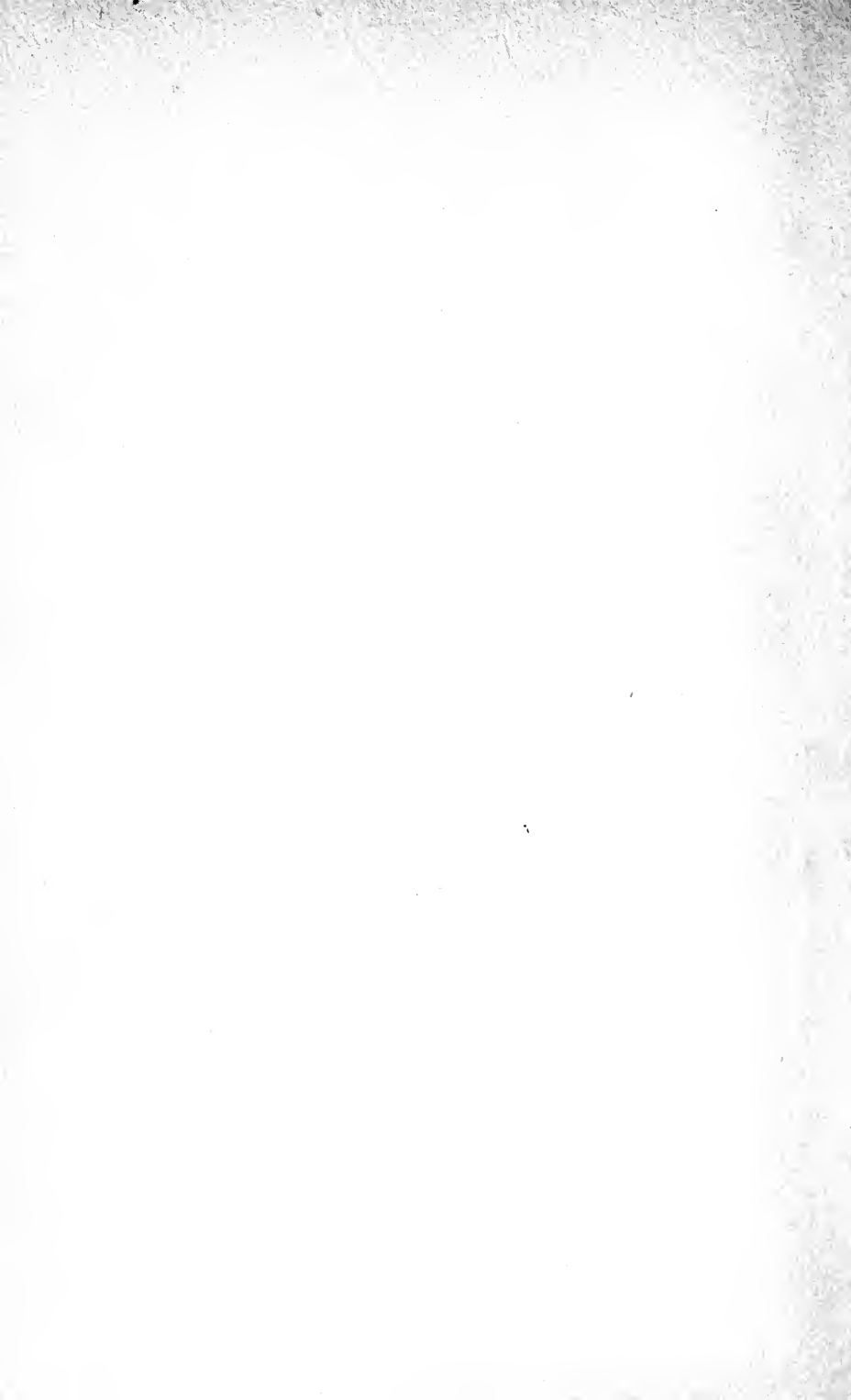
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# ADVENTURES OF A CIVIL ENGINEER

## EUROPE

### CHAPTER I

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**T**HE life of a railway engineer most of whose career has been spent in the wilds, naturally presents a series of incidents largely of an adventurous character; moreover, it is more studded with these than that of others whose avocations or inclinations lead them abroad, soldiers, sailors, and members of other professions, and those following commercial pursuits abroad are chiefly in towns, where human nature is to a great extent in full-dress, and where there is a certain amount of similarity to home life and conditions. The big-game slayer generally confines himself to his own exciting subject, but the railway engineer has to make the best of an ordinary life in the wild jungle, veldt, or lonely bush, making things comfortable, by

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the construction of railways, for the people who follow him, which done, duty calls him still further into the earth's wildernesses to repeat the process.

Light, or what is considered to be such in the mid-winter of the British Isles, was first seen by the author of these notes in Dublin, when the thirties and forties of the last century met.

The first two decades of a man's career, when the preparatory drilling and arming for the battle of life and all its vicissitudes are going on, are seldom interesting, and I shall, therefore, pass over these with the speed of a motor-car, but without, I hope, its self-assertion, its dust, and its noise. The furthest I can go back, as far as personal memory goes, in impressions of my progenitors is to those of my paternal grandfather, who died during my early years at a great age, retired from the Army many years before. He had belonged to the 71st and 83rd Regiments. I remember very little about him except his always wearing a swallow-tailed coat as a day dress in even then old-fashioned style, with tight trousers and a great bunch of seals hanging out of his fob. Naturally, as my grandfather's prime belonged to the eighteenth century—indeed, the life of his father, my great-grandfather, may have extended back to Queen Anne's time—he adhered to old ways. I do not know if he was distinguished, though his services corresponded in time with the great Napoleonic wars. He left no record, not even if he was mentioned in despatches, which distinction in Wellington's time, trifling as it appears to us, was very sparingly bestowed, and valued accordingly. Not as now, when military and naval honours have been so cheapened that it must be a work of art to avoid them, and the star-bespangled bosoms of modern heroes have become so crowded that a distinguished officer himself



## Europe

told me that room would soon have to be found on warriors' backs to sustain their decorations.

It has always seemed also extraordinary to me, though belonging to a military family, many of my nearest relations having been, or being now, in the Army, that it is only almost within living memory that titles and distinctions have been granted for other than political or warlike services. Of course the slaughtering of one's fellow-creatures is often unfortunately necessary for the defence of others of them, but without the existence of the equally noble callings of physicians, engineers, and others, preserving and creating instead of destroying life and property, there would be nothing to defend. Even when the fountain of honour began, later, to flow outside the favoured circle, the first to feel the refreshing baptismal stream were largely brewers and distillers, to whose operations, if teetotallers be right, fatalities are as much due as to those of the soldier. Long ago, Cicero, that most modern and common-sensible, if I may use the word, of the ancients, made the same complaint. Scions of royalty are generally trained for one of the fighting trades; why not for those of peace? There has been recently an effort to put things right in this matter of dubbing professional men attached to the Army and Navy Surgeon-Captain, Engineer-Lieutenant, and so on; but this, though doubtless well meant, appears only to intensify the evil; honourable callings are not made more honourable by the burden of double-barrelled mongrel designations, half of which are altogether inapplicable. The introduction of the triple and quadruple expansion engine into steam navigation has had a more potent influence in these latter times than anything else by cheapening transport, in adding to the comfort and happiness of millions of human beings, and in warding off death and starvation;

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yet the names of the engineers who originated and perfected this invention are practically unknown, while—but I have wandered enough.

To return to my grandfather. He would never enter a railway train, that new-fangled invention of those days. To be blown up by a shell on the field of battle was something, but the possibility of being scattered to pieces by the bursting of a glorified tin-kettle was too much for the old veteran; and indeed locomotive-boiler explosions were not infrequent in those early railway days. He was unlike the courageous old woman of those days who had ventured into a train for the first time. After a dreadful accident in which she was unhurt but much shaken, she calmly asked the guard who had come to assist, When was the train going on again. She was so much astonished at the general violence of the whole journey that the sudden shock of the accident did not seem to her anything beyond the ordinary state of things. Many stories were rife then, especially in Ireland, of the consequences of the novelty. An old man travelling by rail for the first time, was greatly perplexed as to what should be his first steps. He determined he would see what others were doing, and he followed up, to what appeared to him to be a hole in the wall, a smart up-to-date-looking young woman. She happened to be going to a place called Maryvale, so she said to the clerk inside, "Mary Vale, single." Quite confident now, the old man approached the hole and said, "Cornelius O'Brien, married!" At first there were no such things as fast non-stopping trains, they all stopped at every station. When the more modern system was introduced, and an express train at Broadstone Station, Dublin, was about to be started, a porter came along the platform shouting in stentorian accents: "This thrain stops nowhere."

## Europe

Let us consider for a moment what England was, as regards transport, before the railway era. In 1700 there were very few roads and canals; in 1800 things were somewhat better, as fair roads and canals existed, but even with these it took sixty hours to go from London to Edinburgh, as against little over eight now. And it must be remembered that these older journeys would have meant also a great deal of fatigue if taken through without a halt, the passengers sleeping in jolting coaches and sitting up all the time. Most travellers, however, broke their journeys at inns, and they probably took generally twice or three times the time mentioned to reach their destination, even if not stopped by highwaymen, whereas the traveller over the same distance now arrives as fresh almost as when he started.

Roger Bacon, in the fourteenth century, predicted that "carriages would move without horses and ships without sails," but this was only a prophecy. Solomon de Caus, a Frenchman, in 1641, proposed working carriages by steam, and so worried the authorities of the day that they shut him up in the mad-house of Bicêtre, so that the madness of one century is the sense of another.

Savery later, James Watt in 1759 and again in 1784, Cuquot in France in 1763, Moore in 1769, Evans in America in 1773, Murdoch in 1784, and Symington in 1786, all were feeling their way to a workable locomotive but without success. Murdoch had actually constructed one, and he was experimenting with it on the high road when it got away from him and proceeded alone at a rapid pace. The Rector of the neighbouring parish was the first man to meet it, puffing, as he thought, fire and brimstone, and, thinking it to be the devil himself, fled into the fields and nearly died of fright.

Meantime, rails had been introduced for horse-drawn

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vehicles, and Richard Trevithick, who was the real inventor of a locomotive, finished in 1801, which could draw a load, exhibited one in London on rails in 1808.

He was a man of singular genius, but of a character and temperament which wholly unfitted him for following up and bringing to a successful issue the several ingenious inventions of which he was the originator. Others followed, but George Stephenson, who usually has the credit of the invention of the locomotive, originated little of it, but had the sense to combine in "The Rocket," the first really successful machine, the suggestions of others, and to avoid the defects in previous engines which he soon saw were fatal to success. He also had that dogged determination and self-confidence, in its best sense, in which his predecessor was so deficient. It must be remembered that the idea of making a vehicle go by forcing its wheels round, as in the locomotive and motor-car of the present day, was quite unfamiliar to the men of those days, so much so that Brunton, in 1813, constructed an engine with legs, the propelling action being similar to that of an animal. After the machine, however, had walked a few yards, she exploded for all the world like a burst bubble company, leaving only a few worthless assets and two or three dead people around.

This perplexity about wheels was put an end to by Stephenson, and finally, in 1825, the first public railway was opened from Stockton to Darlington, he being the engineer, the first of our special craft.

Public attention does not, however, appear to have been attracted in any great degree to the matter till the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was finished in 1830, and even then, and for some years after, the general public had not the slightest idea of the future development of railways.

## Europe

Look through the writings and letters of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Landor, De Quincey, Leigh Hunt, Lytton, and others of the time, and there is scarcely a word about the new means of transport which was to have such an effect on civilization, though a great part of their literary work was later than 1830. In that splendid combination of humour and eloquence, *Sartor Resartus*, published about that time, Carlyle speaks rather contemptuously of the "Liverpool steam carriages."

Even in the forties, railways were still such a novelty, at all events in Ireland, that I remember my grandmother taking me as a great occasion for a few miles' trip in a train. Who does not know of some little child taking in with its whole soul some new impression, never to be forgotten, with its wondering eyes—perhaps one of the most beautiful things in this world of beauty? There are, no doubt, germs which touch the mind as well as those affecting the body, and possibly one entered then into my small brain which led me, many years after, to dedicate my life's energies to the design and construction of some of the great highways of modern days, in many lands. For it must be remembered that, crude and inadequate as the locomotive was at first, it was, of all inventions before or since, that which, as all far-seeing men well understood, was to influence most not only material, but moral and intellectual progress. Surely Ruskin was wrong in declaiming against railways, for if they destroyed some elements of beauty, millions of people, on the other hand, have been by their means enabled to see the loveliness of Nature and Art, and to gain, by greater intercourse, access to minds of other men from which otherwise they would have been debarred.

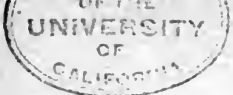
I may relate here some more early railway stories. The Eastern Counties line, now the Great Eastern and one of the best-managed railways in the kingdom, was in

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the old days just the reverse, the slowness of the trains being proverbial. A friend of a director's remarking that the line was the first one built, the latter replied, "Well, no, it was one of the early ones, but not the first." "But I can prove it; your trains are mentioned in the first chapter of Genesis, where it is stated that 'God made everything that creepeth upon the earth.'" An old woman was travelling on the same line with her son, and the guard, collecting tickets at the end of the journey, objected to his half-ticket, alleging that he was over the age-limit and should pay full fare. "But," said the mother, "he was all right when we started, but your train was so long a comin' that the lad has grow'd since."

Much passenger travelling was done in pre-railway days, and for some time after, by canal as well as mail coach. I remember what were called "fly-boats," which carried a great number of passengers, with handsomely fitted up cabins and towed by a team of horses. A great speed was attained, and the wash on to the canal banks following the boat was very great. Dublin and the river Shannon and many other inland places were thus connected. People, especially in the country parts of Ireland, were so ignorant that I remember, long before *through* tickets were thought of, hearing an old woman asking, at a country booking office, for a ticket to America. Possibly she thought that the train would land her there.

The first railway station ever built—Westland Row, on the Dublin and Kingstown Railway—was within a mile of our house. This was not the first railway, however, but the one or two lines constructed in England before it had no stations, in the present sense of the word, the passengers getting up from and down to the road side, as in the case of the mail coach. It was



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a considerable time after the introduction of railways before travelling by road in private carriages by the wealthier classes was abolished. They hesitated for a long time to travel in vehicles in which they might be brought into contact with their tradespeople, commercial travellers, etc., and for some time only made use of them to send their servants and luggage. When they did use them personally they had their private carriages loaded up on railway trucks and sat in them. But in 1847, a countess travelling with her maid in this way was nearly killed by her carriage being set on fire by an engine spark while going at full speed. The maid jumped off and was severely injured, and, the train drawing up at a station, the mistress was rescued. The incident put an end to the practice. The late Queen did not travel by train until seventeen years after the first railway was opened, and the Duke of Wellington, who was present at the first railway accident when Mr. Huskisson, the prominent politician, was killed, never entered a railway train after that until a few years before his death, some twenty years later, when he was obliged to do so in travelling from London to Windsor in attendance on the Queen. I remember one of our boyish excitements in connection with the new method of travelling was to slip through the railway fence and put on the rails fourpenny pieces, which have since been superseded by threepenny bits. After the train had passed over these they were expected to be flattened into sixpences, with the object of getting more tops or toffee for them. This practice could not be, in principle, distinguished from coining or passing bad coin, but I do not think that we thought of that. The commercial speculation by which 50 per cent profit was hoped for was not, however, on the whole, a success, many of the coins being struck away and lost in the ballast.

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One of the early railways was worked by air, and was located close to Dublin. A tube was fixed between the rails, and the leading carriage (for there was no engine) was attached to a piston within the tube, the air in front being exhausted by a stationary steam engine at one end of the line. The train was, in this way, sucked along the rails. The railway was on a steep grade, so that the return journey was effected by gravity. I frequently travelled by these trains, which went at great speed, but the working was found not to be so economical as by the locomotive, so that the system was abandoned in favour of the latter.

One of the earliest things I remember—and I mention it to show how far back memory can go, for it happened about sixty-four years ago, and I still have the scene vividly painted on my mind—was being taken by a nursemaid to Merrion Square in our neighbourhood, and mingling in a shrieking and howling crowd. Above, in a window balcony of one of the houses, addressing them in loud tones, was a stout, clean-shaven, red-faced man with a bloated face. I remember the scene as if it were yesterday. This was Daniel O'Connell, who was described by Disraeli as probably the greatest popular orator that ever existed.

To show the changes in customs which have taken place since that now far-off time, I have a shadowy recollection of a young aunt's wedding, the festivity, for some reason, taking place at our house, when a yellow chariot hung on high springs, such as we now see only in old engravings, took away the married pair. It had four horses with postilions riding one of each pair, an equipage never seen now except in royal state processions. A recollection of a more comical incident occurs to me, one that perhaps would never occur out of Ireland, and not even there now. A stately old lady



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who might have been one of the reigning beauties before the Union, when Dublin, with its parliament, was more the seat of Irish rank and fashion than ever it has been since, was sitting opposite to me at my father's table. I suppose that I was staring at her, wondering at the great contrast between her now closely wrinkled face and her light brown glossy hair, so ill-matched, when suddenly, looking at me intently, she put up her hand, and pulling off her whole head of hair, flung it into the air. As the idea of such a thing as a wig was then absolutely unknown to me, I got a great fright, greatly wondering what was going to happen next, perhaps a similar operation with an arm and possibly total dismemberment. I may say that it was quite a usual thing then for old people of both sexes to conceal the devastations of time by wearing wigs, though, as the device hardly ever deceived anyone, the fashion was curious.

The entry of the young Queen Victoria with Prince Albert into Dublin took place in 1849—a great excitement, for no sovereign had visited Ireland for nearly thirty years. We had seats in a friend's window from which to see the royal procession. The Queen, then about thirty years of age, had a slight figure, and the Prince of Wales, now King Edward VII, was a small boy dressed in Highland costume. At night the city was illuminated, but not as such displays are exhibited now with brilliant devices in gas, for this illuminant was chiefly limited to street lamps, private houses generally using oil lamps and candles. There was no plate-glass, and to the centre of each small pane, twelve to eighteen to each window, an ordinary tallow candle was fixed. No pane was without its light, for otherwise the glaziers were considered to have an unwritten right to throw stones and break the offending pane.

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Self-interest rather than excess of loyalty was, no doubt, the actuating motive. Candles and oil lamps, chiefly the former, were, as a rule, the only indoor illumination, and a pair of silver snuffers on a tray was indispensable in every living-room. The former was like a large pair of scissors with a sort of box on one blade which was the receptacle for the wick cut off. One of the youngsters' practical jokes of that time was to fill the box surreptitiously with gunpowder, and watch the result when some timid person would use it.

Dublin was a great place for military displays, there being a large garrison in view of possible rebellion, for revolution was not only in the air in those days, but in some foreign countries had come down very much to the ground. The Queen's birthday, but much more notably the anniversary of Waterloo, then well within the memory of most people, was always celebrated by a review and sham fight on a large scale in Phoenix Park, and the military uniforms being much more gorgeous than in these days, it was a magnificent sight. All the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war with none of its miseries were there. We used to go in my uncle's open carriage, from which, like all others, the horses were detached during the fight. My father only kept a single-horse closed brougham. The great feature was the cavalry charges delivered with swords flashing, and at such speed and ever increasing roar right up against the line of carriages, that it was almost impossible to conceive that the troops could draw up in time to avoid overwhelming us. The pedestrians around us could not stand it, but fled. Nevertheless, we longed for repetition. This is a curious tendency of the human mind, and no doubt accounts for many a desperate deed, such is the fascination of danger. I know of a small boy who quite recently longed to be

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taken on to an open foot-bridge under which enormous express trains, at perhaps seventy miles an hour, would pass. These would so greatly frighten him temporarily, with noise and smoke, that he would cling to his nurse, crying frantically, and yet next day he would beg to be taken again.

The Waterloo sham fight was abolished when, in 1854, we went into alliance with the French at the commencement of the Crimean War, so as to avoid hurting their feelings, but later generations have no idea of the hatred and jealousy of foreigners, with the spirit of the previous generation still in us, which prevailed even in the forties. One Englishman could beat any three Frenchmen, and the chief reason for the three Frenchmen's existence was that they should be so thrashed. Foreign cookery consisted of the treatment of vile compounds of snails and frogs; foreign manners were superficial, and as for religion—where it existed at all—it was a mass of gross superstition and ignorance. There was little difference between French, Germans, or Spaniards—they were all equally contemptible foreigners.

Talking of the strong Dublin garrison, the Government used to make it appear to be still stronger by marching regiments backwards and forwards, to and from the several barracks within and on the outskirts of the city. Ireland was certainly disaffected then, and perhaps went a little too far in shooting landlords, etc.; but it is odd that in years when these and other agrarian crimes were rife, the average criminality of the country was not abnormal, nor greater than that of Great Britain at the same time, showing that the homicidal impulse tends to maintain averages, though breaking out in a special direction, so that when landlords and their agents are shot other people escape. I recall an agrarian murder trial during which the married men of the jury, who

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comprised most of it, each received, anonymously, a neatly packed bandbox containing a widow's cap. Even if the senders could be traced, no legal case could be made out that this delicately polite action meant anything, though the jury thoroughly knew what would happen if an unpopular verdict was returned.

I spoke just now of the magnificence of the military uniforms which the necessities of the subsequent Crimean War put an end to. It impressed us children, as another uncle, in an infantry regiment, who was home from India used to stay with us, and we had a near view when he dressed for a levée or other state function. The shako was very tall, splaying out at the top like a flower-pot in defiance of all principles of gravity, and with a ball at the top. It must have been difficult to hold on. Both it and the scarlet swallow-tail coat were plentifully trimmed with gold lace, and gorgeous epaulettes covered the shoulders, while a stiff high patent-leather collar, black and shiny, nearly choked the wearer. It must have been as difficult to fight in such a rig as for a peacock to dance a hornpipe.

I remember seeing the first Duke of Cambridge, brother of George IV and the father of the Duke whom the present generation remembers, reviewing some troops in the old Linen Hall Barracks in Dublin. He was very gorgeously attired, and being an old man he looked every minute as if he were going to choke, with the high black stock within the high upstanding and richly laced collar of his scarlet coat. The private soldier was very differently clad. The cloth of his coat, which was also swallow-tailed, was coarse and of an ugly brick-dust colour, while the trimmings were of common white braid. He had, however, in common with his superior officer, to wear the stiff black choke band inside the collar or facings of the coat. It was feared that when the old

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Brown Bess was abolished, and the rifle became the ordinary weapon of all infantry instead of being limited to the rifle regiments, the distinctive dress of the officers might cause them to be picked out. Hence the change to practical uniformity which now exists.

Talking of clothes, these, as regards men, were always in those days of broadcloth of decided colours—black, dark green or blue, or brown generally called snuff-colour. Grey tweeds, such as are mostly worn now, were unknown. The Quakers, now indistinguishable from others, wore drab cut-away coats with turned-up collars and broad-brimmed stiff hats, quite conspicuous in the streets. Another distinction from the present day was the general knowledge of horses and riding, owing to the recent introduction of railways. It is the exception now, except among hunting men and stable boys.

The early Victorians are now, ever in increasing numbers, passing on their way to dusty death, so that to a very large proportion of my readers some of the manners and customs of the forties, to which I shall presently come, will be of interest. I am continually reminded of this fact, for the Institution of Civil Engineers, to which body I have had the honour to belong now for over forty years, sends out in its quarterly volume of transactions, sandwiched among more cheerful matter, short obituary notices of members passed away. Few of these volumes appear without the name of some friend or colleague of old, and they not only recall to my memory some of those vanishing early Victorians, but, Egyptian fashion, seem like so many skeletons drawn around my longer feast of life, from the expectant bitters of youth to the walnuts and wine of satisfied old age. These serve also to remind me that I too, with all my deeds and misdeeds—among the latter,

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perhaps, the perpetration of this book—shall appear some day in this fatal record.

There has been a great change in the sixty years in manners, customs, and dress. As to the former it is difficult to make a comparison, though there is no doubt that among the higher classes manners have deteriorated. It is difficult to compare, because the mixture of classes is so much more general now than then. Distinction was more marked, and it was especially so in Ireland. There were the “county” people, consisting of landowners, peers, and others, with some, perhaps, of the Anglican clergy, and occasionally professional men who were connected with or related to them. Then there was the great professional class—clergy, barristers, and the higher rank of medical men and solicitors, officers of the Army and Navy and Civil Service ; thirdly, there were the second class of medical practitioners and dentists, dissenting ministers, auctioneers, merchants, shopkeepers, etc. ; and lastly, the labouring class. It was said of an elderly cousin of mine, who, though in poor circumstances, was descended from a distinguished statesman who was Lord Deputy of Ireland 350 years ago, and whose full name he bore, that he went round leaving P.P.C. cards on his friends when his son entered a profession or business of some kind, assuming that, after that declension from his order, they would receive him no more. But this sad degradation to some sort of peaceful occupation had partially set in before that time, and was accentuated by the employment, in the forties, of the great landowners as directors of the new railways, by which much of the opposition of their class to this useful invention was placated. If managers of the common carrier’s business, why not sellers of the goods carried ? The first step had been taken.

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Facilis descensus Averno.

Sed revocare gradum . . . . .

Hoc opus, hic labor est.

And so we have now blue-blooded barbers and high-born haberdashers (limited), who are not above advertising 4s. 11d. blouses to be struggled for, at summer sales, by the dear little innocents who would think 5s. altogether beyond their means.

By the way, though this is not a record of the adventures of my ancestors, having plenty of my own to write about, it might be related that it was the daughter of an ancestor of this elderly cousin and mine who was the only woman Freemason. This was about 150 years ago, when overwhelming female curiosity led her to hide herself in an old grandfather's clock, from whence she could hear and see the ceremonial of a masonic lodge. On discovery she was there and then initiated. I joined this ancient body nearly fifty years ago, and have belonged to lodges in Ireland, India, South Africa, and Australia.

The race of brilliant after-dinner talkers, what the French call *raconteurs*, men who could tell a good story, or even a bad one, well, seems practically to have ceased out of the land. It is probably due to the rise of the modern newspaper, which provides thoughts and opinions ready-made for everybody, saving them the trouble of thinking, and therefore of such talking as is the outcome of thought. Certainly laziness of mind is the inevitable result of cheap newspapers.

The gulf between the classes I have mentioned was as deep and, except for an occasional bridge thrown across, as impassable as that between Lazarus and Dives, while nowadays, for good or for evil, the bridges

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are numerous and spacious. It is, no doubt, owing to this change that the decline in manners appears to be so great, as one is comparing those of an exclusive caste with those of a more mixed one.

In the old days one would never see a gentleman smoking, not only in the presence of ladies, but even where they were likely to come. Again, at that time, meeting a lady with lifted hat to converse, a gentleman would not put it on again until he either passed on or received special permission to do so, nor would he fail to rise and open the door for a lady leaving the room. Not paying a formal call on his hostess within a few days after an entertainment, however small, was unpardonable, and, in the absence of a reasonable excuse, the offender would never get an opportunity of amendment. These things, accompanied by an indescribable distinction of manner, are now as extinct as the Pythonomorphic Saurian, but there was an outward graciousness and lovingkindness about them which is a real loss to our modern time.

But there were sets off to this polish. Men's talk was often interlarded with oaths, and even very old ladies, who were really of a previous generation, used sometimes to season their remarks with an occasional mild "begad." Snuff-taking has also happily disappeared. I remember when there were shops in which nothing else was sold. At hotels, ladies were never seen in a public dining-room (always called coffee-room—I do not know why), and it was necessary to engage a private sitting-room at considerable expense when they travelled. Social degradation would also follow ladies using hansom cabs or omnibuses. Smoking was the exception rather than the rule, and pipes, except among the working classes, were unknown. It is curious that modern dress and customs have largely



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come from below. Trousers, the lounge coat, caps and short hats, pipes, and the stable-boy dress in which rank and fashion now ride in the park, illustrate, to alter an old adage, the homage of imitation which the classes often pay to the masses.

The three-bottle man was a practically extinct species in my time, but living specimens were known. I remember on the occasion of a ball at our house, a guest who had arrived with his coat all muddy being politely ejected, he having previously dined with unnecessary intensity. Two or three decades before, such a man would have been only laughed at, and invited again. Duelling had become so far extinct that it was a subject for ridicule, and when that stage is reached, the end is near. One of our neighbours, a Major F——, “went out,” as it was called, with an opponent, on what grounds of quarrel I forget, but it was said that both parties went by railway to the scene of slaughter, taking *return* tickets. I do not remember if any one was injured.

My theatrical recollections go very far back, as my uncle, holding debentures on the principal Dublin theatre, the Royal, often gave his sons and nephews his free admission tickets. Calcraft, a well-known veteran tragedian of the old school, was the lessee, an old instance of the actor-manager. I never could understand this old man taking young parts, which, however, he did well. There were many tales in connection with the old Royal, which has been long ago burnt down and replaced. One was of a Juliet in the tomb scene, who, when lying in the supposed trance, was seized with an intense inclination to sneeze, the attempted suppression of which induced the most obvious and painful contortions, and when all failed, and explosion after explosion took place, all the more vigorous from the previous efforts at restraint, the

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illusion was entirely destroyed, and the whole of the tragic business immediately following was utterly ruined.

In a performance of *Hamlet*, in which, it will be remembered, the ghost does not appear between the first and the end of the third acts, the actor of that part left after his first scene, and putting a cloak over his costume, went outside to have a drink with some others. Shortly after, however, the Hamlet happened to burst a blood-vessel, and there being no one to replace him, the manager announced to the audience that another play would be substituted. Meanwhile the ghost, all unknowing, and letting time slip by, while getting a little bit mixed with overdoses of whisky, looked at his watch, hurried back, and seeing two actors on the stage just about the time he was due, went on "in complete steel," only to find, too late, that another play was in hand, in which the unexpected appearance of a ghost was altogether disconcerting.

No doubt at the later interview with the manager he found

"No reckoning made, but sent to his account,  
With all his imperfections on his head."

The visits to the old Royal gave me the opportunity of seeing many of the great singers, instrumentalists, and actors of the time I now speak of, and later in the early sixties. These were Grisi, a stately creature, and Mario, a graceful actor, but with a second-rate voice, Tamburini, Lablache, Alboni, Catherine Hayes, Cruvelli, and later, Titiens and Guiglini, the latter being fat and awkward, but with a divine voice. He was eccentric, to put it mildly, and his favourite amusement was to fly kites out of the hotel window which, as it was opposite our office, we could see. Charles Mathews

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was the most vivacious and versatile artist I ever saw on the stage. A true artist, who was the character he represented—never himself. I shall never forget a piece in which he took an irresistibly comic part, the audience, in one scene, being in roars of laughter when, suddenly, the news of the unexpected death of the father of the character was brought to him. The sudden change from boisterous comicality to poignant grief, when he bowed his head and cried, "My father, my poor father," was the very perfection of acting. An inferior artist would have made the scene ridiculous or maudlin.

Wieniawski, whose compositions are so well known now, was then making his first appearances as a violinist. He used to be nicknamed "Wine or Whisky," and had an uncertain temper, as is often the case with the great, and consequently generally spoiled, geniuses. I remember seeing him in the middle of a solo suddenly shake his shaggy locks about his head and leave the stage, nothing inducing him to return. What angered him no one appeared to know. Charles Kean and his accomplished wife, previously Miss Helen Tree, I met at the Dean of Ossory's in Kilkenny, where he was giving readings, and I also saw him act in the celebrated Shakesperean revivals at the Princess's Theatre, London. These were the first instances of dressing the plays elaborately with fine scenery and really accurate costumes. Kean's father, Edmund, an unlearned genius, was before my time, but the son was a cultivated University man. He had a harsh voice, and as an actor was far inferior, I believe, to the father. Subsequently, in London, Dublin, and in Paris, I had the opportunities of seeing and hearing Sims Reeves, Viardot-Garcia, Ronconi, Lucca, Trebelli, Nilssen, Dolby, Sembrich, Ilma de Murska, and others. The latter, whom I heard

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on her first appearance at Covent Garden, made an extraordinary impression, but after a few years' triumph seemed to have disappeared, and I believe died in poverty.

Sainton, Oberthur, Vieuxtemps, Piatti, Hallé, and Remenye, are among the instrumentalists of the past who pass through my visions of the bygone days ; while as to actors, the list would indeed be long. I shall only mention, besides those referred to elsewhere in these memories, Paul Bedford, Robson, Phelps, Fechter, Buckstone, Farren, Salvini, Sothern the elder, Helen Faucit, Madame Celeste, Miss Glyn, the elder and younger Delaunay, Got, Coquelin the elder, Lefebre, Rose Cheri, Theresa, Judic, and Desclée, the latter, without doubt, the most perfect actress I have seen on any stage. Most of these are mere names to the present generation, some of them no doubt forgotten ; but there is not a performer of the present day who does not owe to them the great debt of raising the standard of the several arts in which they so greatly excelled.

One of the great attractions in London of the fifties, I think, was the lecturing of Albert Smith in the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, on an ascent of Mont Blanc. He was a wit of the day, and one of *Punch's* earliest contributors. The lecture relating his adventures was most amusing. Another place, hardly ever missed by the visitor, was the Globe in Leicester Square. It was an immense hollow globe lighted within, the spectators seeing the various countries' geographical features, etc. on the inner side from a circular gallery. The building in which it revolved was in the middle of the square. There were two Italian operas always going in the season, the old Covent Garden and the old Her Majesty's, both since destroyed. At the former Pro-

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menade Concerts and masked balls were sometimes given. There used to be a celebrated conjurer named Anderson, who called himself the Wizard of the North. He on one occasion hired Covent Garden for a masked ball, and when the fun was fast and furious a fire occurred, reducing the whole edifice to ruins. I forget if any persons were burnt, but I remember a sensational story of the time which affected to relate the adventures of one of the thirty pieces of silver for which our Saviour was betrayed. All sorts of misfortunes were supposed to befall the several owners of the coin all through the centuries, until the history was brought down to date, when finally, one of the dancers at the Covent Garden ball, in a dispute with his partner, threw the fatal coin to the ground in a passion. It became red hot and burnt the floor, and, as a consequence, the whole theatre. Truly a fine thread upon which to hang a whole series of Hall Caine-Corelli blood-freezing tales.

Though I have just been anticipating theatrical experiences far ahead of the forties, before I leave that epoch it would give perhaps the most vivid impression of the changes which have occurred since if I give a short list of the things, which we habitually use or suffer from now, and which were practically unknown then, taken at random : Steel pens, envelopes, note-paper, lawn-tennis, motor-cars, bicycles, ironclad ships, screw steamers, electric telegraph, sleeping and dining-cars, electric light, telephones, lifts, large hotels, fountain pens, garden parties, afternoon tea, tramways, photographs, postcards, perambulators, spring mattresses, plate glass, bitter beer, torpedoes, breech-loaders, revolvers, wooden pipes, competitive examinations and cramming, art colours, society papers, illustrated magazines, hypnotism, Christian science,

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millionaires, massage, volunteers, typhoid, diphtheria, airships, suffragettes, Salvation Army, tinned goods, fish - knives, goloshes, waterproofs, gas heating and cooking, sewing - machines, threepenny bits, florins, Venetian blinds, spiritualism, weather forecasts, posters, moustaches, wood pavements, hospital nurses, lady helps, limited liability, Victorias, Cook's tourists, dyspepsia, parcel post, appendicitis, hot-water bottles, and bacilli, and yet we got on very well without these.

In 1851 we all went to the great Exhibition of that year in London, the first ever held.

It was on the occasion of this visit to London that I saw the great Duke of Wellington, then in his eighty-second year. It was at a review at the Horse Guards, and though a good deal bent in figure through age, he rode easily at the head of the troops at the side of Prince Albert. It is characteristic of the Duke, whose dispatches make good reading, that in them the word glory never appears, though duty does so often.

I think it was then that we saw that great actress Madame Vestris with Charles Mathews at the Lyceum, one of the few theatres of that time which still survives, when a play called *The Chain of Events* was running—a marvellous performance in eight acts, and much talked of. At that period the performances began about 6.30, and there were generally three plays—a curtain raiser, the main serious piece, and a farce, all lasting till near midnight. Half-price admitted at 9 p.m. those who could not go through the whole. There were no posters then, playbills in shop windows advertised the performance. In Dublin, gallery audiences were frequently noisy, and when the Italian operas were occasionally performed, the University students used to give gratuitous musical displays in the gallery, between the acts, with a regular conductor, and very good they

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often were. Favourite singers on the stage, when called before the curtain after the opera, were sometimes rewarded by handsome presents let down from Olympus by a wire arrangement.

I remember one occasion when some of these students dressed up a figure made of straw, which was taken above, and after a "got up" row in which the cries "Throw him over" were prominent, the dummy was pitched headlong over in such a direction as to hurt no one below. Great, of course, was the consternation of the general audience before the joke was made apparent.

A well-known Dublin character of that time was a man who, as regards his first cognomen, was nicknamed Paganini, so called because he was deformed, having a crooked neck giving him the appearance of the great violinist of that name in the act of playing his instrument. He was once in the hunting field, being an enthusiastic sportsman, when, being thrown from his horse into a ditch, some villagers came to his assistance, and seeing his head all awry, tried to make matters right by pulling it with all their might into what they naturally believed was its right position, while poor Paganini, half stunned, kept shouting out, "Born so, born so!"

An adventure of this period is hardly worth mentioning except that had it turned out differently none of the following ones of this narrative would ever have happened. I was nearly drowned bathing alone. Though a good swimmer, a strong tide was carrying me out to sea, and it was only by clinging on by the barest hold to seaweed and barnacles that I managed to save myself, when just on the point of exhaustion. The thoughts of those terrible few minutes are still present to my mind. This was at a lonely spot at the foot of the wild promontory of Howth—pronounced Hōthe—(why in

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the name of common sense are the names of so many places like this—Cirencester, Reading, etc.—not spelt as they are pronounced ?)

I was confirmed, about this time, by the great Archbishop Whately, the famous theologian and writer of books on logic, under which so many of us sit and groan at school. He was the author of many lighter things—for instance, conundrums, one of the best of which was this : If the Devil lost his tail, where would he go for a new one ? Answer : To a public-house where bad spirits are retailed. At a dinner which he gave to the Irish bishops, one of whom—the Bishop of Cork—happened to be in a silent mood, the Archbishop finding the wine not circulating briskly, said, “Cork ! you are stopping the bottle.” The reply was, “True, but your Grace is drawing me out.”

A clerical notability then was Pakenham, Dean of St. Patrick's. He used to be noted for the magnificent way in which he pronounced the benediction, letting each word, uttered with a splendid voice, reverberate through the vast Cathedral, the echo of one word being allowed to sound before he would follow with the next—“The Peace—of God—which passeth—*all* understanding”—etc. etc. People used to go specially to hear it. He also used to deliver the Commandments in such an impressive and authoritative voice, with the last word of each ringing through the building, that it was impossible to conceive of anybody going out and committing murder, for instance, within two or three days at least. Pakenham was a brother-in-law of the great Duke of Wellington, but they were not friendly. It was said that when the Duke was Prime Minister, the Dean wrote to him saying, “One word from you would make me a bishop,” to which the Duke, in his laconic fashion, replied, “My dear brother, not one word, yours sin-



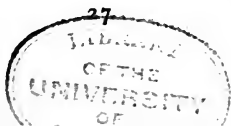
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cerely, etc." I heard Spurgeon also at this time—a wonderful preacher with a most musical voice.

Dublin is unique in the possession, from the Middle Ages, of two cathedrals, for though that might be said of London now, anciently London and Westminster were not joined as at present. In the days I speak of, choral services were limited to cathedrals and Chapels Royal, and adult singers in the Dublin cathedrals, St. Patrick's and Christ Church, were of higher standing than most of their class, many of them being doctors of music and noted composers. This was, if I may call it so without irreverence, the hat-smelling epoch of the Church of England.

In 1856 my father, who held a good position in the Irish Civil Service, died in London, on our way back from the Continent, where, for his health, he had gone. On this trip I had the opportunity, having halted some time in Cologne, of seeing the great cathedral there, then without its mighty towers, since added, but what a glorious Gothic interior! the first of such magnitude that I had seen. The impression has never left me, and whenever I had the chance I went in among the occasional kneeling figures, while the gorgeous ceremonial, so wholly different from the bald proceedings of our Anglican service at that time, led me to think of these things from a new point of view, possibly the commencement of a taste for liturgical study which, many years later, I entered upon. The magnificent gloom of the interior, the grey quiet of the place, coming in from the glare, heat and noise of the busy street, the apparently endless complexity of the lofty vaulting of the dim roof, all make a deep and solemn impression on the mind.

We came down the Rhine by water—a tedious journey, saddened by the care of the invalid—to the Hague



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and Rotterdam. Holland made another impression, with its flats, its innumerable windmills, its dog-harnessed carts with their brilliantly polished brass milk-pails, its mirrored windows, and its quaint old-time buildings.

It became necessary, soon after my father's death, for me to choose, or have chosen for me, some blameless way of making my living ; and my uncle, the first one mentioned in these pages, who was consulted, selected the former alternative, holding that, as a rule, everyone should select his own career if possible, having thereby the best chance of succeeding in it. I had the usual classic education of the period, and was also well grounded in French. I had no taste for the Army, and, probably owing to the sights on my travels, already fairly extensive for a youngster, and the engineering exhibits in Hyde Park in 1851, I chose decisively the calling of civil engineer, a choice which I have never since regretted. There were practically no engineering technical colleges at that time, so I was articled to a well-known engineer of that period, Mr. G. W. Hemans, a son of the famous poetess, who had a large railway construction practice in Ireland and, subsequently, to a lesser extent, in England. As I had not sufficient means of my own to pay the entire premium required, my uncle advanced me the balance, which I was to repay by monthly instalments as soon as I began to earn something for myself. When that time came later, I paid the first month's sum, but on presenting myself punctually with the second, to my astonishment he refused to take it, and decided to forgo the rest, as he said he only wanted to try me. I believe if I had been a day late, I would have had to pay the whole, to the uttermost farthing. He was like some others I have met, extremely economical in

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small things, but generous in larger matters like this, which was all the kinder, for though a rich man, he had a large family and a considerable establishment to keep up. According to a tradition of the family, he seems to have changed his habits when, many years before, he had married and settled down. He had kept more hunters than he could well afford, and drove his drag and four, which was supposed to be a typical extravagance of those days.

There was a story of him that, one night at the Dublin Theatre, where there was a long flight of stairs from the main entrance to the dress circle, a cavalry officer had been staring too hard at a lady under his escort, so that my uncle pitched the offending warrior from the top to the bottom. I never heard that a duel, which was the usual thing in such cases then, followed. To us young ones, who knew only the well-ordered establishment of B—— where, though comfort prevailed, the expenditure of every pound was considered, the stories of these earlier episodes were sufficiently surprising.

## CHAPTER II

Donnybrook Fair—More Irish stories—A riot dispersed by bayonet charge—Donati's comet—Eccentrics—The civil engineering profession—Riot in Dublin—Cavalry charge—The *Tuscarora* and a threatened sea-fight—The Yelverton trial—The Serjeant's stories—An eccentric Irish M.P.—The limbless Arthur Kavanagh, meeting with him and anecdotes of him—Hunting—The Marquis of Waterford—A wine party—My first railway accident—Paris—Colman's Mustard.

THE art and mystery of civil engineering were now to be driven into me, in the first instance by monotonous tracing of drawings and plans—for in 1857 there were no mechanical means of reproducing these such as exist now; designing bridges and railway stations, as to which also there was not then the experience to lean on that we have at the present time; the initiation into the use of the apparently complicated surveying instruments and their use; and the assistance given to full-fledged engineers in the setting out and construction of railways and other works. These latter operations brought me for the first time into contact with Irish country life.

It was the period of the so-called "Donnybrook Fair" Irishman, with his swallow-tail coat, small clothes, and worsted stockings and battered tall hat, now never seen off the stage. So-called, I say, because Donnybrook Fair, long since abolished after an existence of 500 years, was held in a Dublin suburb near the site of the present Dublin Horse Show, and was a sort of Saturnalia of that city's riff-raff. No typical Irishman was to be found

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there, nor would they, in general, be found in the Dublin streets, any more than one would find Hodge in the Strand or a Highlander in Glasgow.

Ireland, at least as I knew it fifty years ago, was so different from any other country on the globe as to its conditions and inhabitants, including others besides the battered hat variety, that, perhaps, I should have included it in my title as a sixth continent, especially as I see that, while I write, New Zealand with its scant history and scattered population, has, in its cocksure youth, dubbed itself a Dominion. The Irishman takes life easily. With all his political grievances, his poverty and shiftlessness, he gets more value out of life than his immediate neighbours, thanks to his greater cordiality and aptness for intercourse. Nothing is truer than Emerson's description of the Englishman, "This Islander is himself an Island," while the Celt realizes much more readily the truth of De la Rochefoucauld's maxim, "*Pour bien jouir de la vie, il faut glisser sur beaucoup de choses.*"

There was, at the time of which I speak, more of the spirit of adventure and less calculation of the consequences. People were much more easily amused, and above all, there were more eccentric people, modern civilization tending to drive us all into the same groove, which perhaps in making life more comfortable, makes it much less lively. John Stuart Mill, in his book on *Liberty*, enlarges much, and with regret, on this modern tendency. An instance of the first-named quality occurs to me. Several of us assistants were engaged in the north of Ireland planning out a new railway, and at dinner one evening a dispute arose as to the width of a dock down south at Limerick, one of the disputants declaring that he could jump across it. A bet against this was at once made, and to decide it, the next

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train to the south was taken. The jump, which was across a deep walled dock in which failure to reach the other side would probably have been fatal, was made by the light of the moon, and a return to business made as soon as possible. It was the jumper on this occasion who lost the favour of his chief by two actions. One was by throwing a too importunate tailor out of the window, by which the unfortunate tradesman was somewhat injured, so that our friend, like Touchstone in the play to a limited extent, had undone one tailor at all events. However, being only the ninth part of a man, no doubt he fell lightly. By the way, on this principle it ought to be legal to pay only one-ninth of a tailor's bill. The other *faux pas* committed by our comrade was marrying a milkmaid.

The greed of money-making and the worship of what Ruskin calls the Goddess of "Getting on," were not so evident then as now, though even earlier Heine had written—

"But everything is out of gear now,  
Such push and struggle, care and dread;  
Of God on high we have no fear now,  
And now below, the Devil's dead."

As a probably necessary accompaniment to this absence of care and greed there was, I think, more feeling for others. I remember well seeing, on a Sunday afternoon, about a hundred young men reaping a poor widow's field of corn for nothing, thus giving up their day's rest to help her, the priest looking on approvingly. This was not unusual.

Flax is grown largely in these northern counties, and the girls engaged in the culture used sometimes to lie in wait for us and suddenly emerge with a lot of wisps of flax, upsetting and entangling us so that we were absolutely helpless, then only setting us free, with much

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laughter, by our paying what was called our footing, all round.

The Irish colleens in those days used to go about usually barefooted, but on market days, when entering the village, they would sit down and put on boots for the occasion, combining a doubtful addition to their comely appearance with a certainty of torture from the unaccustomed wear, from which, on leaving the town, they lost no time in relieving themselves.

It was the crinoline period of which I am now treating, and even these unsophisticated damsels were not untouched by the craze, as we found that the wire used for our railway fences occasionally took to disappearing in the night time, it being useful material for constructing these fearful and wonderful garments.

The scene shifts to the west, where, in a little country town, I was assisting the District Engineer in the construction of a railway extension, a man to whom I was much attached. Poor Tom G——, he was hopelessly, immeasurably in love, so much so, that having no one else to confide in, and having a very unreserved disposition, he told me a good deal about the absent divinity. Long, long after, in a distant colony, he was again my colleague, then married. The divinity, who was a beautiful woman, so adored him that she never spoke of him by name. It was always "he," and she seemed to think that Tom, being everything to her, "he" could only mean to others what it did to her. Alas! it was to end soon. His work lay in the rough interior where there was no accommodation for women, and she lived in a distant town where, getting typhoid, she died amongst absolute strangers before her husband could reach her, no one knowing more than her name.

Country dentistry was primitive then. There was no regular dentist in the town, and having an aching jaw,

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I went to a man who used to be a sort of substitute for this necessary evil. He laid me flat on my back on the floor, and then placed the four legs of a chair around the middle of my body. He then sat on the chair, and holding my forehead down with his strong left hand, dragged out the offending tooth with a pair of carpenter's pincers. I remember it.

But to return to the more amusing events of our western town, and to what I shall speak of as the hot-copper incident. Not what might be called the post-whisky interpretation of that epithet, but connected with actually red-hot pennies and halfpennies.

In love though he was, Tom was ever ready for a joke. In the little corner hotel where we stayed, a candidate for Parliament had hired rooms facing our street, we occupying those round the corner. He, on one occasion, was addressing from a window the crowd below, in that flamboyant and jocular Milesian style which alone seems to relieve the intolerable dullness of the British Parliament, and which, if banished to Ireland by any Home Rule Act, would make our English legislature as serious as a suet pudding. While this was at its height, we were roasting pennies on a frying-pan and throwing them out, and the politics and the pelf, occasionally much allied, became serious rivals. Realizing without knowing it Horace's dictum, *Interdum vulgus rectum videt*, the crowd rushed round the corner to pick up, and drop again as quickly, the fiery coins, and the competitive struggles were as exciting as a suffragette tussle.

I do not remember whether it was in connection with this particular election, but it was from the safe eminence of these hotel windows that I saw, on the occasion of a political riot, a real charge of troops with fixed bayonets, in which they really meant it. Below us, armed with



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pitchforks, shovels, scythes, and shillelaghs, and throwing heavy stones freely, was an angry and howling crowd, threatening an obnoxious politician who was well guarded. Matters becoming serious, and the stones taking effect on the troops, they were ordered to charge. Even from where we were, the sight of the cold glittering steel in serried ranks lowered for business was terrible. No one who has not seen such a thing can imagine what it is like. On came the red-coats relentlessly, the frantic shouts and screams being almost deafening. I have heard it said that, in actual warfare, unless the charging ranks hesitate, or are greatly broken by opposing fire, even disciplined troops cannot stand before an advance like this. Needless to say that, after a moment's hesitation, the crowd turned and fled, scattering up lanes and alleys, the troops hastening their pace and disappearing round a corner after the largest remnant.

It was in 1858 that the great comet of Donati was seen, and some of my older readers may remember what a glorious sight it was. It extended over nearly a half of the visible heavens, breaking through, while intensifying, the magnificent monotone of the midnight sky, a glory among glories, but greatly vaster. This brilliant visitor could be seen for several weeks, then gradually faded away. At one part of its progress the tail, which fanned out considerably, crossed the bright star Arcturus, which could be seen plainly through it. The period of this comet, I believe, is about two thousand one hundred years, so that its previous visit to the neighbourhood of the Solar System was about the time of the first Punic War. It is already over fifty years on its return to space. When it comes next, what changes it may see in the things and thoughts of this little globe! We shall probably have a two-minute

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radium-car service to Mars, and tastes and ideas will be so altered that Homer will have nodded himself into oblivion, while Shakespeare and Milton, perhaps even Bernard Shaw, will be unmeaning names. Goodness, that wonderful repository of all knowledge, only knows.

A prominent man of the neighbourhood where we saw this magnificent sight was the Hon. J. P——, who may serve to illustrate some previous remarks I made about the eccentricities of the older time. He used to dress in black velvet with knickerbockers long before these latter garments were used by boys or men, or even before the name was known, and scarlet silk stockings, the whole being crowned with a slouch hat and white feathers. At the receptions held at his fine mansion the lights were so dim that one could hardly find one's way about the various rooms.

Before I leave the west, I must mention an incident in the construction of the railway on which we were engaged. The farmers were chiefly tenants from year to year, and consequently, by the strict letter of the law, which, however, was never enforced, were entitled to no compensation for the land required for the railway. One man, enraged at what he thought to be insufficient payment for the disturbance, as it was called, sought to create another sort of disturbance by preventing the entry of the navvies. He stood at a gap in his boundary fence defying them and flourishing a reaping-hook in his uplifted hand, crying out: "The first man of ye that inters here, I will give him the contints of this." However, our party of powerful navvies had not much difficulty in disarming him, and a bloodless entry was effected.

Before transferring my narrative to new scenes, I might break it here by stating that sufficient experience had by this time been acquired to enable me to judge

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of the calling I had chosen, and which had led me to like it more and more. The Charter of the Institution of Civil Engineers defines the profession as "the art of directing the great sources of power in nature for the use and convenience of man, as the means of production and of traffic in States both for external and internal trade." But surely the mere material progress here referred to is only part of the ends and aims of the civil engineer. To intercourse between man and man and country and country, so largely fostered by the efforts of the engineer, we owe much of the moral and intellectual progress of mankind. The invention of printing was essentially a mechanical engineering feat, and history tells us what it did. It simply unloosed the tongue of humanity, and gave the opportunity of exchanging thought for thought in such a way as to light up all the subsequent centuries. Then as to methods of physical intercourse leading up to railways, what international jealousies and hatreds have been softened by the closer mutual knowledge of nationalities which they have produced. The progress is certainly slow, but may we not see in the multiplication of such works substantial steps towards more tolerance, more hesitation in undertaking devastating wars, and a greater approach even to an imperfect imitation of that Divine Love which, as described in the last words of Dante's great poem, moves the sun and all the stars.

Since the time of which I am writing, the profession, like some others, has got into grooves to the advantage of the work, but perhaps to the disadvantage of the worker. Frequently at that time schemes for harbours and lighthouses, railways and canals, designs for locomotives, iron ships, etc., might be found in the office of one great engineer. Nowadays, the man that knows much about one of these things knows practically nothing

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about the others, and a narrow specialism cramps and fetters the intellect. Utilitarianism, claiming the best work from the man who thinks of nothing else and who presumably does it best, has insisted on specialism, and we must give way ; but if essential in business, can we not banish it from our general study ? After all, the smatterer, if he smatters well, is the best company of all. I remember meeting a German literary specialist once—and there are many among that nation—who may serve to illustrate this. I became acquainted with him at the library of the British Museum, at which, whenever I was in London in the intervals of my absences abroad, I was a fairly constant reader. Before I left England he was studying there the myths prevalent in Greece in the time of Alexander the Great. Seven years after, returning from India, I found him again at the same place, still at the same subject. Again, after a long sojourn in South Africa, there he was, grown fatter and greyer, almost like Falstaff “blasted with antiquity,” but still pounding away at his myths. When I came back from a further absence he was gone, and whether he ever reached the publication of the book for which alone he lived, I never knew, or, if that great consummation had been reached, whether any living soul was much the wiser for it. Surely here was “much throwing about of brains.” As someone has prayed, “From the man of one idea, good Lord, deliver us.”

After the west-country work, and at intervals between various engagements in different parts of Ireland, a good deal of time was spent at the Dublin office. It was during one of these times I witnessed a riot in that city. There was a public entry of one of the lord-lieutenants, and the scrimmage occurred in College Green, which, by the by, is not, as an Irishman should say, a green at all at all, but a street. It is opposite the

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buildings of Trinity College—at that time a stronghold of Orangeism, which the University students considered as loyalty, as against Irish disaffection. Through the display of flags or emblems—I forget by which side—and inflamed by that spirit in which the Irishman ever regards fighting, more as an end than as a means, the students got into violent collision with the populace. The viceregal procession had passed with all its bravery and its military escort, and the disturbance arose through the display of flags by the spectators, so that order had to be restored by the mounted police. The din was terrific, and the orders of the officers could hardly be heard above it. These orders were, however, to charge, and on came the troopers with their drawn swords flashing in the sun. The collegians, who were assumed to be the aggressors, made a brave show of resistance, but the police laid about them freely with their weapons, and one of the students was killed and many were wounded.

It is almost unthinkable now, but the police, both on foot and mounted, as well as the postmen, wore at that time tight swallow-tail coats and tall hats, and in summer white linen trousers, but the combination of such a costume with what was virtually a cavalry charge did not seem absurd to us then, when practically no other head-gear was known among civilians except the labouring class.

The unequal fight did not last long, but it created a great deal of excitement at the time, and the more so, as the students who suffered most were supposed by their very opinions to be on the side of authority.

There was in the green, a bronze equestrian statue of William III, who was considered the very embodiment of Protestantism, and the scrimmage raged around it. The following night some of the anti-English party

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drilled a hole in the king and filled him partly with gunpowder, with the object of blowing him up; and had not the plot been discovered, the monument would have become a king of shreds and patches, instead of remaining, as I believe it does to this day, an ornament to the city.

It was somewhere about this time—that is to say, in the thick of the American war—when the warship *Tuscarora* steamed into Kingstown Harbour, close to Dublin. She was a Northerner, and she was soon followed by a Southern cruiser, which anchored close by. Of course, according to the law of nations they could not fight there nor within a specified number of miles from the coast, so they could only, if the figure of speech be allowed, glare at and show their teeth to each other. The excitement was to speculate which would get away first, and on the issue of the fight which, after the definite limit had been reached, was certain to follow. I remember going on board the *Tuscarora*, and being astonished at the sight of the desperate cut-throat, pirate-looking men—some of them negroes—on board. Everything was cleared for fight.

The great Yelverton case, which shares with the Tichborne trial of later days the fame of being one of the *causes célèbres* of the Victorian Age, but had more romantic episodes connected with it, took place in Dublin about this time, but most of the actors in it, and of those who excited themselves about it, have now passed away.

Major Yelverton, afterwards Lord Avonmore, who had been wounded in the Crimean war, had been nursed in the Military Hospital near Constantinople by a Miss Theresa Longworth, one of the devoted band—the first of the kind—which had been organized by the celebrated Miss Florence Nightingale. Subsequently,

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Miss Longworth, who was a wondrously beautiful, clever, and fascinating girl, alleged that she had been married to the Major according to the Scotch law in Scotland and the Irish law in Ireland, the matter being complicated by the fact of the lady being a Roman Catholic and the alleged husband an Anglican. The case before the courts was to establish her position as his wife, and the evidence was startling as well as contradictory, the most famous counsel of the day being engaged on both sides. Perhaps there is no case on record in which the personal fascinations of one party in it had so much influence. It was even said that the judge, who was a bachelor, was in love with the plaintiff, and that his efforts to sum up impartially were attended with extreme difficulty. Certainly the jury, to a man, were carried away, and nearly all male Dublin as well, the young men putting themselves into the place of the fair plaintiff's horses and drawing her to the court and back, while thousands of us left our cards on her to show our sympathy, at the Gresham Hotel where she stayed. It was a case of one of Bryon's heroines—

“Then had her eye in sorrow wept,  
A thousand warriors forth had leapt,  
A thousand swords had sheathless shone,  
And made her quarrel all their own.”

Needless to say, the verdict was given unanimously in favour of youth and beauty in misfortune, but it was coldly reversed on appeal by the House of Lords, who took a calmer view of the facts, and who, it must be remembered, in justification of the Dublin verdict, had only the written evidence and the arguments of counsel before them, and never saw, or came under the distracting personal influence of the fascinating Theresa. Otherwise, perhaps, who knows? It is an old story,

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and readers of the *Iliad* will remember how, when Helen appeared at the Scæan Gate, before even the aged Priam and the elders of Troy, which had suffered so frightfully through her fatal beauty, they declared that Greek and Trojan alike were blameless in fighting for such a woman. Homer, unlike the modern novelist, never describes his heroine, the whole story implies her fascination. And so let us understand the Irish verdict in this notable case.

I had the good fortune, shortly after, to see a good deal of one of the leading counsel in the case, Serjeant A——, in connection with some business, and heard interesting facts about it that had not come before the public, and which were told with that Falstaffian humour, harmonizing with his ample bodily proportions, for which he was noted. Apart from these, his anecdotes were endless ; but in relating a couple of what I believe to be his here, at this distance of time, their exact origin may be possibly misplaced. A similar remark may be applied to some of the stories which follow in this book.

A priest, who had rather the reputation of not leading a very strict life, but was a powerful and persuasive preacher, was holding a mission at a distant town, and calling at a cabin and talking about his work, one of the girls said, “O Father dear, we never knew what sin was till your Riverince came among us.”

A well-known professor of Trinity, Dublin, was so absent-minded that his wife nearly always accompanied him for fear of any accident or *contretemps*. One of his habits was to have only one suit of clothes, which he wore till they were threadbare before renewal. Once a friend persuaded him, unknown to his wife, to buy a new ready-made suit, in which, she being for once absent, he arrayed himself to attend a meeting of the



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University Senate. After he had left, his wife returned, and seeing the only clothes, as she thought, that he possessed, thrown on a chair, the horrible idea came to her mind that the professor, in a fit of absence of mind, had gone without any to the meeting. Nor was she much reassured when both the maid and the college porter, in answer to her anxious inquiries, said they *did* see something unusual about the professor's appearance when he passed them. Great, therefore, was her relief when, bursting into the Senate Chamber, she found her husband clothed and in his right mind.

Talking of eccentrics, I have come across an unusual number in my long career, but perhaps never so many as during this Irish period in the various country parts to which my duties led me. One of these was Alderman Delahunty, a Member of Parliament, whom I met frequently through his being a director of a railway the construction of which was in my charge. His personality was very striking. He wore a red, or rather what used to be called a bag wig only partly covering his hair, on which, where exposed, he used some inferior dye, so that when it required renewal, which was frequent, it turned quite green.

He had a most wonderful twinkle in his eye, and such a way of telling the simplest of his stories, of which he had many, that Heraclitus himself, the weeping philosopher, would have endangered his sides in his company.

A Romanist himself, he told us once of a bishop and parish priest travelling together and, owing to the crowded state of an inn where they stayed, being obliged to occupy one room. Before getting into bed they both knelt down to say their prayers, and the bishop not liking his subordinate to suppose that he could be too brief, held on for a considerable time,

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while the priest, thinking that his orisons should not be shorter than his lordship's, persevered, and finally they both fell asleep.

As Delahunty told his stories, you could see the humorous idea contained in them gradually developing in his rubicund countenance, and breaking out by degrees all over his face. In the House of Commons, where I suppose very few now survive that heard him when he got up to speak, with that irresistible twinkle in his eye, so suggestive of the coming jokes and humour which he never could suppress—even in that grave assembly, members would laugh for minutes together in anticipation. Curious to say, though acting with the Irish party, he never took much interest in their chief aims, but was something of an authority on the dry subject of currency, thinking that if the Irish one-pound note were abolished, all would be well. John Stuart Mill was the god of his worship. The alderman was one of the shrewdest and most kind-hearted of men. He is long since dead, with “his flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar.”

Another oddity was a man who never went to bed, and lived, notwithstanding, to a great age, not even, as far as I know, going there to die, like most people. But perhaps the most remarkable man I met, in one sense, was the well-known Arthur McMorrough Kavanagh, of Borris, M.P. for Carlow. He was born without legs or arms, yet used to write, drive, ride, paint, shave, etc. I can personally testify to the first three, for I have ridden beside him, seen a letter written by him, and frequently saw him drive a spirited pair of horses with the Marchioness of Ormonde of that day, at whose place, Kilkenny Castle, he was a frequent visitor. He was an enthusiastic yachtsman, and there

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used to be a story that he owed his life to his bodily shortcomings in this way. Sharks are well known to prefer a man's legs as a repast to any other part. Now Kavanagh was cruising somewhere in the southern seas, and in a place where these "sea attorneys," as Byron calls them, abounded, he fell overboard. Instantly a dozen hungry sharks crowded to the spot, but seeing a man without legs they retired in disgust, and he swam away unharmed, for that was one of his accomplishments.

In riding, he sat in a sort of box like that used for children on seaside donkeys, with a skirt round his stumps, and he actually followed the hounds. Indeed, he rode from Russia, over the Caucasian Mountains, to the Persian Gulf. Subsequently, I have seen him taken in and out of the House of Commons, carried on the back of his servant. I never heard him speak there, but I believe that he was the only member who was allowed to do so without standing. No doubt that this was one of the most wonderful instances known of human mastery over adverse physical circumstances.

Less so was the case of Sir J—— B——, Bart., in the next county, Kilkenny, who had a cork leg which—these contrivances not being so well made then as now—used to stick out awkwardly in riding, and seemed almost miraculously to miss obstacles in the hunting field, in which practically nothing stopped him. He was one of the best billiard players I ever had the cheek to contend against, and, I believe, met on nearly equal terms the best chess players of that time.

I mentioned the then Dean of Ossory in an earlier part of these recollections—Dr. Vignoles, at whose hospitable deanery I stayed occasionally. He was a perfect specimen of a clerical type now practically extinct, dignified, scholarly, and courteous, with great

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breadth of mind. He had a passion for curios, and possessed a silver fork with claws like a hawk's foot and curiously carved ivory handles, as long almost as a toasting-fork. This, he said, had been used by Queen Elizabeth to scratch her back with. Such were the manners and customs in the spacious times of that "most dread Sovereigne."

Though I had only a very limited amount of horse-flesh at my disposal, I was enabled now and then to follow the hounds with the Kilkenny hunt, which used sometimes to turn out over three hundred men in scarlet. Notwithstanding that I have had my share in nearly every sort of field sports at home and abroad, including big game, I doubt if anything comes up to the excitement of fox-hunting. Once I had the rare distinction of leading the field, for the fox had crossed my half-finished railway, and its fences, which were too formidable even for an Irish hunter, blocked the way. I alone knew of the gaps, hence my temporary leadership. The master, Sir Henry Meredith, was all that a M.F.H. should be, and was much liked.

Among the boldest riders was Mulholland Marum, afterwards a popular Irish M.P. In Kilkenny, the approach to the ancient cathedral of St. Canice and the still older round tower beside it, was by a steep flight of steps of great antiquity, much worn by pilgrims of old. A bet was made that no one would ride down these steps, which were of considerable height. Mulholland Marum, knowing his horse, accepted the challenge and accomplished the feat. A well-known publication wrote of this escapade—

"That great Harum Scarum, Mulholland Marum,  
Rode down unharmed, the steps of Kilkenny.  
Had his steed fallen down, he'd have broken his crown,  
And knocked out his brains, had he any."

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The last words were, no doubt, introduced more for rhyme than for reason, as it was well known that the rider was as well equipped with intelligence as with pluck.

Another Nimrod was one of those rather numerous Irish landlords of the old days, who were generally in debt, yet with his house full of guests, he always had a good mount for his friends, and splendid cock shooting, of which I had my share. His son, and heir to his baronetcy, when going up to Dublin, would always toss double or quits with the station-master for his fare. Fancy proposing such a thing to an English or Scotch railway official, or even to an Irish one of the present day! How they would stare, and probably look round for the lunatic's keeper, lest worse should befall.

The south of Ireland was then full of the freaks of a Marquis of Waterford who had been killed hunting a few years before. It was said of him that, being anxious to see the effects of a railway collision—at that early period not as well known as now—he tried to induce the directors of the Great Southern and Western Railway of Ireland to cause two empty trains to meet at full speed, he paying all expenses, but the directors, not having the same sporting proclivities, declined. Subsequently, having some grievance against the company with regard to what he believed to be exorbitant first-class fares, he is said to have hired a large number of chimney-sweeps and paid their first-class fares for several months, to occupy each one a separate compartment. They were to be in working costume, brushes and soot and all. This led, as might be supposed, to the second-class becoming more fashionable, which was a considerable loss to the company.

I have already said that heavy drinking among the higher classes had nearly gone out, but there were

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traces. A party of youngsters took an old deserted castle a few miles from the town of Kilkenny for the winter hunting months. They had been one night into the town at a wine party, where the flowing bowl flowed freely, and the company became gradually—as Byron graphically puts it—talky, argumentative, disputatious, unintelligible, altogether, inarticulate, drunk—which might be termed the seven stages of intoxication. They were totally incapable of walking or riding home, and when the host was tired of them it was too late to hire any ordinary trap to carry them. Several places were knocked up, but the only conveyance to be got was a dray—one of those carts which tip up in order to empty their load. The driver, seeing the condition of the party, all in a heap on the floor of his cart, on arriving at the castle gate, and having no one to help him, simply opened the end door and tipped his load of men out on the ground, where, with that impunity with which Bacchus is said to endow his worshippers, they remained in happy slumbers till the fresh breath of morning waked them up.

The engineering works with which I was connected in Ireland were of an unimportant nature, more especially in comparison with the large works abroad with which I had subsequently to deal. In Kilkenny, however, where for the first time I was put in responsible charge, I built a viaduct which was rather remarkable from its being constructed entirely of black marble, not for ornamental reasons, but because that material was the most accessible and cheapest.

My first railway accident happened about this time. For some time previous, the development of railway travelling had so far progressed in the first quarter-century of its existence that the excursion trip had been invented, and an advertisement induced me and some

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companions to take advantage of one to see Paris, which, though I had been to the Continent as a boy, I had not seen. Going by South Wales, and approaching Swansea Station, we ran bump, smash into a goods train. Sitting opposite to me with his back to the engine was a portly old gentleman particularly well upholstered, and the sudden check to our progress sent me bodily into this soft cushion. At that period I was a slender youth, as full of angles as a proposition in Euclid, so that the old man got considerably the worst of it. "Beg pardon," said I. "Don't mention it," said he; and as our carriage was uninjured, we resumed our positions as if nothing had happened. There were others, however, in the train who were severely injured, though nobody was killed.

I was inexperienced in those days, or should have claimed compensation for shock to system, or something of that kind, which reminds me of a fellow-countryman who was hurt in a collision. He claimed and got compensation for not only himself but his wife, who had not been injured by the accident. "An' how did ye manage it?" said a friend. "Shure an' hadn't I the prisince of mind to fetch her one in the head before they dragged us out," was the reply.

Poster advertisements, such as we see everywhere now, even defiling the most beautiful landscapes, were then unknown, but large printed ones were beginning to crowd the railway station platforms, though even these had not been introduced abroad. On our return, coming from Dover to London, after passing several intermediate stations, a French fellow-passenger, who was in England for the first time, exclaimed, "*Mon Dieu ! quel drôle de chose, que toutes les stations se nomment Colman's Mustard!*" I shall not mention my impressions of Paris, for no doubt they were the same as those of

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hundreds of others visiting in youth that brilliant city for the first time ; but I must say, having been there so often since, there seems to have been a great sobering down of the national character in the fifty years. The modern Parisian is much more staid and business-like than of old. The Palais Royal was then full of brilliant shops devoted to luxurious ware of all kinds, which, with the bands in the middle of the square and other attractions, have all disappeared, and apparently have not migrated to any other quarter.



## CHAPTER III

Parliamentary work in London—Anecdotes of Palmerston, Gladstone, Disraeli, Pope Hennessy, Bulwer Lytton, Whalley, etc.—Parliament in a roar—M. Thiers—The O'Donoghue—Degeneracy of the Commons—Great men born in first decade of the nineteenth century—An Oxford literary breakfast—The Isle of Man—Its Constitution and Cats—Survey difficulties—Plays and operas of the early sixties—Overend and Gurney smash—Paris—Anecdotes—Theatricals—Disappointments—An Indian appointment—Career of comrades—A chain of shipwrecks—Loss of the Mysterious—The Devil in Devonshire.

**T**HE preparation of plans, etc. for Parliament called for much more of the engineer's energies at the time I am now dealing with than latterly. Railways were being pushed forward in every conceivable direction, to the great comfort of the traveller of to-day, and the plans and estimates of proposed railway bills had to be lodged in London at the proper office before midnight on the 30th November each year, in order to entitle them to be dealt with in the following session. If the lodgment were attempted to be made at 12.1 a.m. on December 1st it would be refused, and a year would be lost. Not properly realizing the amount of time necessary for engineers to survey lines and furnish estimates of the cost, promoters often left their schemes till there was very little time for them, the question of raising money also causing delay. As nearly every engineer in the country, competent or otherwise, was in fierce demand at the same time, large fees, unheard of since, were flying about, and though the work, day and night, was strenuous and exciting, it had its due

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reward to follow. London seemed to us on these occasions a land flowing with turtle soup and green Chartreuse, and we began to understand the great cost of the initial proceedings of getting, or often failing to get, a railway bill through Parliament.

I remember coming over to London with a large party, under a temporary employer, for a work of this kind, for we were to finish our office work in Westminster, which, by the way, is the head-quarters of engineering, owing to its nearness to Parliament House. The express trains in the sixties were nearly as fast as those of to-day, though much lighter and less frequent, and of course there were no such things as sleeping-cars, or refreshments except at large stations. We were timed by our train to stop two minutes at Rugby, but this was insufficient for our chief to refill his brandy flask at the refreshment bar. Like Odysseus, a man of many devices, on drawing up at the platform, he shouted to the passing porters a terminological inexactitude, as we should now call it, to the effect that a frightful noise had been going on under the carriage for several miles past, and that he feared something was wrong. The station-master was summoned, and directly a crowd of mechanics were under the vehicle seeking in vain the cause of the trouble, while our resourceful chief was quietly restoring his flask to a temporary state of repletion, not destined, however, to last long.

My original chief was by this time increasing his English work, and one of his parliamentary schemes in conjunction with another leading engineer, was that of the Mid-London Railway, which was to follow practically the same route as the tube with the almost similar name "Central London," since constructed. It was, however, on the same principle as the present

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Metropolitan Railway, close to the surface. The shopkeepers, however, objected to the temporary interruption to their business by the opening up of the street, and also thought that owing to the public being partly diverted from the footway to the underground line, they would lose patronage. They forgot, however, as has since been shown by the construction of the Central London Tube, that by giving better access to the street from greater distances, much more custom would be gained than would be lost through the local diversion of the traffic. The scheme was therefore rejected at their instance, and the shops lost for many years this advantage, while the public now has the otherwise unnecessary trouble and delay of going up and down lifts to reach the trains, instead of having them at the foot of a short flight of stairs. It seemed hard to us that a work which would have provided us with fairly lucrative employment for some years, and, as the subsequent adoption and success of the Twopenny Tube, on a similar route, shows, would have been a public benefit, was thrown out, under a misapprehension, after a lively debate.

Very few of these railway bills, however, were honoured by a debate, they were mostly left to parliamentary committees, in business attendance on which I heard many eminent men. Sir William Vernon Harcourt, subsequently a prominent politician; Sir Edmund Beckett, afterwards Lord Grimthorpe, of church bell fame; and Hope Scott, a son-in-law of Sir Walter, whose surname he assumed. For his able advocacy of, or opposition to, railway and other schemes, the latter was said to be fee'd at the rate of a guinea for every word uttered. Carlyle, who was then living, wrote, "Speech is silvern but silence is golden." In Hope Scott's case it was speech that was golden. It

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was said, however, that sometimes large fees were given to parliamentary counsel to retain them, merely to prevent their engagement by the opposition, so that, in these cases, silence became golden also.

Of course, there were many opportunities also of hearing the ordinary debates in Parliament on political subjects of the day through the help of members. In this way I had the advantage of hearing most of the high-candle-power political lights of the early sixties—Palmerston, Gladstone, Disraeli, Bulwer Lytton, Lord John Russell, then, I think, in the House of Lords as Earl Russell, and many others. Palmerston, who always dressed in the style of 1830, was a poor speaker, hesitating and groping about for his words, but as he generally discovered the right one ultimately, his speeches read admirably in the *Times*, where the pauses were, of course, omitted.

A debate comes to my mind when Mr. Pope Hennessy, a well-known eloquent Irish member of that time, one of those who were “agin” all Governments, gave a magnificent oration in favour of armed help to the insurgent Poles against the tyranny of Russia. It was a long speech, and to my youthful enthusiasm it seemed absolutely convincing. The cheers it elicited seemed to predict an overwhelming majority. The speaker had words at command, and, as far as fire and fluency could make it so, it was a great speech. Palmerston then got up and hesitated and stammered a few words of common sense, showing how the proposal was impossible—a halting poor utterance in comparison—and the motion was negatived, I think, without a division. Next day, in the *Times*, about twenty lines were given to Pope Hennessy, while Lord Palmerston had half a column which read as if the speech were delivered without a pause or a repetition. At that

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time, the impatience of Parliament at an unduly long speech was shown by loud cries of "Divide! Divide!" shortened into "'vide, 'vide, 'vide!" sometimes so loud as to drown the speaker's voice. This seems to have gone out of practice.

Gladstone, whom I also heard in his prime, was, the exact reverse of Palmerston, voluble in the extreme. Fluency, however, does not always mean a richness of vocabulary, often the contrary. The hesitating speaker often has quite an army of words in his mind's eye, and the hesitation does not always show that he has none at command, but rather that he has too many, from which, while the hearer is waiting, the speaker is choosing the right one. Hence apparently bad speeches often read better. Gladstone was a master of finance and figures, with which he could deal for hours with hardly a note. He was a man of integrity, but without those inseparable twin sisters, imagination and humour, and hence he was deficient in foresight.

It was some years after this that I happened to be travelling in the same train that took him from Oxford, where he had been defeated at a general election, down to Liverpool, to contest that constituency. He looked haggard and cast down, as well he might be, for Oxford University was and is the most intellectually blue-blooded constituency in the kingdom; but his progress in the radical direction, afterwards, and probably in consequence, more pronounced, was already too much for them. Gladstone always pronounced such words as revenue, and similar ones, with the accent on the second syllable, in the old-fashioned style.

Disraeli, his great opponent, put more light and shade into his speaking. It was much slower, and he brought down the points he wanted to make with great emphasis. I never saw the House so enthusiastic as

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when on the occasion of a foreign policy debate somebody accused the Government, of which he was a member, of placing England in a position of isolation. After rebutting the charge, Disraeli said that England had been many times isolated in European crises—for example, when she stood practically alone in Europe against Napoleon, and the other nations were cringing at his feet, and, raising his voice, he said that if such a contingency were ever to recur, England would again be found in a similar state of splendid isolation. This, I believe, was the origin of that now common phrase; the House simply rose to him, and the cheers were so prolonged that it was some time before he could proceed. Disraeli was unrivalled in answering awkward questions. The reply, generally fairly long, contained no information whatever, and sometimes appeared to leave the questioner more ignorant than he was before.

Many years after, just before his death, I heard of a most pathetic incident in the course of one of his speeches, as Lord Beaconsfield, in the House of Lords. It was not, of course, mentioned in the newspaper reports. He had proceeded for some minutes, when suddenly he stopped blank, and after a moment turned to the peer next him, and said: "What am I talking about?" Not only the particular argument, but the whole subject of debate had escaped him, and his neighbour had to bring it all back to him, in a hurried whisper, before the speech could be resumed. It was his last—the old fire had gone out, and the incident illustrated the wane of one of the most brilliant and powerful intellects of the nineteenth century.

Bulwer Lytton, though better known by his writings than in politics, was a most fascinating speaker, full of the most apt quotations, classical and otherwise, and queer illustrations with which he livened up the most

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prosaic subjects, but his action was somewhat violent. It was he, I think, whom I heard defining a political opponent as an honourable member possessing a great amount of small information. Bulwer Lytton was one of the earliest of the older statesmen to wear a beard and moustaches. Lord John Russell, like the much later politician Lord Randolph Churchill, was always represented in *Punch*, the only comic paper of that day, as a small man; but in neither instance was this the case, both being little, if at all, under middle height.

The funniest thing I have heard in the English Parliament was in a speech by a Mr. George Hammond Whalley, who was well known, at the time of which I write, as being under a fixed, and no doubt sincere, belief that all the mischief in the world was caused by Roman Catholics, and especially by Jesuits. This member was a halting speaker, but, unlike Palmerston, when hesitating for a word generally hit on the wrong one, and he was never taken seriously by the House. He was drawing attention to the case of a young girl who, he alleged, was kept against her will in a convent, and who, when visited by friends, was compelled only by the presence of priests and fear of punishment to express contentment; but, he went on to say, when, through some inadvertence, the visitors on one occasion saw the girl in—in—her—natural state. Here the House roared with laughter, which went on, subsided, and then revived and continued for such a long time that the poor man's confusion, as far as I remember, prevented him from proceeding. None of this, I need hardly say, appeared in the brief report of the speech in the newspaper reports, for the class of publication which would, in the present day, have caught hold of such an incident, did not exist then.

Talking of statesmen, I remember an instance of how

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foresight may fail in the greatest of them, a description which few will deny to the late M. Thiers. Mr. C. B. Vignoles, the President, about this period, of the Institution of Civil Engineers, was a very old man, who had accompanied M. Thiers in 1830 when the latter, commissioned by the French king, visited England to see if railways, then being started in this country, should be introduced into France. Mr. Vignoles stated in his presidential address that Thiers had said to him on seeing the new invention, that it might do very well in England, but it was totally unsuited for France.

A curious sequel to this was an anecdote which, quite recently, I heard from a peer to whom Lord Granville himself had told it, concerning the same French statesman. It was in the terrible time of 1870, when the Emperor Napoleon III, being taken prisoner, the German troops were pouring into France, helped by the very railways which Thiers had, forty years before, declared useless. Thiers himself, using the same means of conveyance, was travelling over Europe from capital to capital, day and night, to try and arrange some combination of the Powers which would check Germany in her conquering career. Finally, reaching London, unsuccessful so far, and, being an old man, in a state of physical exhaustion, he called on the morning of his arrival on Lord Granville, then Foreign Secretary, to see what the British Government would do. The veteran statesman had hardly begun his tale of woe when, quietly reclining back in his chair, he fell asleep in the middle of a sentence. Lord Granville, knowing that his Government could not help, noiselessly left the room, giving orders that his visitor should not be disturbed, and Thiers slept peacefully in the chair until evening, when, of course, he got the reply which, no doubt, he could not but have expected.



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I used to meet at the house of another uncle in Dublin some of the leading Irish members. He was a prominent barrister and doctor of laws, with a leaning to Liberalism. These members, though generally "agin the Government," were of a very different class from those of the present day, for reasons into which it is unnecessary to enter here. One was The O'Donoghue of the Glens, his wife being always called Dame O'Donoghue. He was a very handsome man, and as to his style and title, it was said that there were only three persons entitled to the unusual prefix—the Pope, the Devil, and The O'Donoghue. The Lord Dudley of that period was very eccentric in appearance, wearing long ringlets and a broad-brimmed hat.

Going to a sitting of the House of Commons recently, I was greatly struck with the change from that of the old time. I say nothing of its present efficiency for the needs of the time. I only speak of its decline in culture and in scholarship as a whole, for some exceptions remain. The rough speech, the want of polished deference to the Speaker, and a number of small details only apparent to one who remembers its well-bred past, were especially noticeable. I refer to a time before the late Father of the House, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, entered it, and therefore before any of the present members were in it.

It has been stated as a remarkable fact that a great majority of the most eminent persons of the nineteenth century were born from the middle to the end of its first decade. Could the apparition of the great comet of 1811 have had anything to do with it? We all know how the visit of a great comet synchronized with Julius Cæsar's end, and why not a similar occurrence at the beginnings of other great men? Here is the list. Browning, Tennyson, Dickens, Thackeray, Gladstone,

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Disraeli, Bismarck, Darwin, Louis Napoleon, Sir George Grey the great pro-consul, Robert Lowe, Manning, Wendell Holmes, Longfellow, Poe, Cavour, Garibaldi, Abraham Lincoln, Wagner, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Mrs. Browning, John Stuart Mill, Charles Kean, John Bright, and Bishop Colenso. Take these away, and, intellectually, the last century would not shine, while as they were in their prime in the sixties, that epoch may be fairly considered an Augustan period.

Some of the above, with others, used to meet at the celebrated Oxford breakfasts at Commemoration time, when the feast of reason and flow of soul were popularly supposed to be of a prodigal nature. However, these men were, naturally, not always on their pedestals; hence the disappointment of an aspiring young man of the time who, greedy of knowledge, had been invited on one occasion. Now, thought he, I shall be able to find out from Browning whether *Sordello* (which he had read through twice) is the name of a man, a term in metaphysics, or something to eat. I shall hear from Gladstone something of the attributes, from the Homeric standpoint, of the grey-eyed Athene, some thunder and lightning from Carlyle on the shams and hypocrisies of the age. But Carlyle sat in the silence that was golden scowling at his plate, and Froude having mentioned that he suffered from corns, Browning suggested a remedy, and Gladstone another, on which a debate as to which was best arose, supplemented by recommendations from others, so that this useful but by no means ideal subject shut out all others to the end of the meal, and the young man went away sorrowing, for he had great expectations.

Trips to the English lakes, North Wales, Scotland, and the Isle of Man, either on pleasure or business, intervened between parliamentary business. In the

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latter place I was surprised to meet one morning at breakfast at the hotel a cousin of mine from Dublin, looking very lugubrious, as well he might. A night or two before, dining with some other men at the Royal Irish Yacht Club, at Kingstown, near Dublin, a bet was made that a safe trip to the island by a half-decked boat belonging to one of them could not be made. The bet was taken up, and the start made then and there at midnight, my cousin being one of the crew. They got fearfully knocked about, the seas sweeping over them, and carrying overboard the owner of the boat, whom his companions were unable to rescue. After a great deal of difficulty the rest of the party managed to reach the island.

This curious island has a Constitution and Parliament of its own, which latter has its opening meeting under a tree on the top of a hill. It has, I believe, been largely reformed since I was there, but at that time the Upper House consisted of the Chief Justice, the General commanding the forces, the Bishop, and other officials, and the two Deemsters, whose offices are of great antiquity, dating back to the time of the Druids. The Lower Chamber, called the House of Keys, had twenty-four members, for which women could vote, and when a vacancy arose the remaining twenty-three elected the man to fill it, so that the ruling party were spared the pangs usually caused by a by-election.

In addition to this queer constitution are the queer cats without tails. Darwinism, the idea of which had just been started, though now a commonplace of science, was then a heated subject of controversy. The *raison d'être* of the Manx cat was thus given by ardent Darwinists. "You see," they said, "the primitive inhabitants of the island fed on cats, which they, having

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no missile weapons, caught with their hands and converted into sausages. Naturally the cat with the longest tail was the easiest caught, the shorter-tailed animals surviving in greater numbers to reproduce their short-tailed kind, according to the principles of heredity. Shorter and shorter grew the tails in successive generations till they became stumps and finally disappeared, resulting in the present tailless species."

The railway from Douglas to Peel, the survey and plans of which we were engaged upon, was the first one made in the island, but there were many difficulties, and it was not constructed for many years afterwards by a totally different set of promoters.

I may mention here one of the curious minor troubles we had in the survey of the line. There was only one practicable gap through the range of hills forming the backbone of the island, and the course of the proposed line at this place was therefore limited to this spot, which was thickly wooded. The landlord who owned the property here, though favourable to the project generally, objected to a single branch of the trees being cut, so that no sight with the spirit-level or theodolite could be obtained through. After much persuasion, however, we at last induced him to allow such leaves to be removed as would leave a hole about three inches in diameter right through the wood, for the necessary observations which, with this embarrassing limitation, were greatly delayed. I never had such an experience before or since.

As I was destined soon after this to go away to various uttermost parts of the earth, and except for comparatively short intervals, to stay there for many years, I was fortunate in being able to see and hear, in one respect at all events, the best that was going on at the time. The proprietor of the London boarding-house at which, when

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in town, I stayed had some connection with the theatres, so that every evening he had at his disposal a number of free tickets for them, including frequently, guinea stalls at both opera houses, for two were then flourishing—Covent Garden and Her Majesty's—the latter having been since burnt down. These he frequently distributed to his guests, so that I heard all the great singers and actors of the day without drawing on my banking account, which, never superabundant, was already beginning to show weakness through the growing slackness of engineering enterprise. There had been an outburst of railway extension, not nearly so great as that of 1845, though still considerable, but reaction had set in, and engagements were becoming more and more like the proverbial visits of the angelic host. On top of this had come the great failure in 1866 of Overend, Gurney and Co., the noted bankers, which brought down with it hundreds of financial institutions, on which so many public works of all kinds employing engineers depend.

It was a bad time for all, except the undertakers burying suicides, the cobblers mending the boots of those wandering about in search of employment, and the Crown servants, whose salaries, like that tiresome brook of Tennyson, rippled on for evermore.

I went to Paris to see if anything was to be done there, but though I had good introductions, I soon found that the Overend and Gurney smash had affected the whole of Europe, and there was no opening. However, I stayed for a while, to perfect my French, by boarding at a house in the Rue Boissy d'Anglas, where no other language was spoken, this being a rule of the establishment. Here there were some curious characters. One old *militaire*, always called Monsieur le Commandant, who remembered the first Revolution, and distinctly recollected, as a child, seeing the head of the beautiful

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Princess de Lamballe carried on a pike, and her body dragged through the streets of Paris. The Queen Marie Antoinette was then in prison at the Temple prior to her own execution, all ignorant of the terrible fate of her closest friend, and the proposal, which fortunately, for some reason, was not carried out, was to make the unfortunate queen kiss the lips of the princess's severed head. We read in history of these frightful atrocities, but to hear of them through the vivid and emotional relation of an actual eye-witness, with all these horrors still in his mind, is a totally different experience.

Another boarder was a legitimist Count who, having lost his estates in one of the revolutions, had dropped his name and title, simply calling himself M. L'Ami. He was generally spoken of as Père L'Ami. He had a great hatred of republicans, and well he might, for in the revolution of 1848 his only sister had been shot by them in the streets of Marseilles. Though a Bourbonist, he supported the then Emperor Napoleon III, as keeping down the hated *gens du pavé*, to whom, I well recollect, his applying an apt quotation from Mirabeau, "*Ce sont deux animaux bien bêtes, que l'homme et le lapin, une fois qu'ils sont pris par les oreilles.*"

The Prussian-Austrian war was going on at this time, and many were the discussions at table between the boarders of different nationalities, of which there was a variegated assortment. A little black-bearded Austrian and a heavy-looking Prussian who sat opposite to each other naturally took much part in these. The Austrian possessed a canary of which he was very fond, and which he called "Arthur," and when the cat of the Prussian killed the bird, great was the excitement. I recall distinctly the pathetic voice in which the former told me the news that "*Le chat de M. le Prussien a mangé mon pauvre Arthur.*" The great war which was to culminate

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in the crowning victory of Sadowa paled before the more immediate cat-canary catastrophe, and we of the neutral nationalities could hear, metaphorically, the rattle of the needle-guns and the cannon's roar in the scowls and sneers of the two hostile Germans.

The Emperor Napoleon's fête day, 15th August, occurred during this visit, and there were unusually splendid illuminations and fireworks at night, but very bad management as regards control of crowds, far from verifying Sterne's oft-quoted saying that "They order these things better in France." For some reason, the greater number of the many bridges across the Seine were closed, causing frightful crushes at the open ones, so much so that several people were mangled to death and some forced over the parapets into the river and drowned. Of the latter, the body of one man was recovered later with twenty-three watches in his pockets, so that a prosperous professional career was thus cut off in its prime. Some of us had an unpleasant experience of these disasters, for we had been given tickets of admission to the roof of the *Ministère de la Marine*, looking down upon the *Place de la Concorde*, the scene of the guillotine executions during The Terror. Into the quadrangular courtyard of this building were brought the wounded and dying, who were being attended to by the surgeons, as we passed out. Otherwise we should hardly have heard of these accidents, for the newspapers, which were under the censorship of the Government, hardly noticed them, as discrediting the Emperor's administration. Napoleon III, like a modern Augustus, had put an end to civil turmoil, and under him material wealth had increased, but there were drawbacks. I well remember seeing him drive in the Bois de Boulogne with his massive aquiline nose and heavy fair moustache and imperial.

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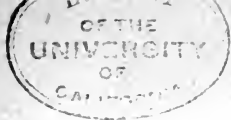
The gay city was then really gay. Spectacularly, I do not think the theatrical displays, at all events in Paris, were inferior, forty years ago, to those of the present day. One of the most perfect instances of stage management was in an extravaganza called *Cendrillon*, where one scene showed all the Prince's retainers searching for the lost slipper. They each had lamps of different colours, and as they moved about they formed themselves successively into various ornamental designs, never going astray. Another was in Meyerbeer's opera of *Robert le Diable* at the grand opera house, then in the *Rue Lepelletier*. The principal character is alone in a convent churchyard in the dusk, when the ghosts of the buried nuns arise from their graves and gradually surround him. First one dim white figure in the half-light in the distance, disappearing soon, then another, and gradually more, until in a short time the immense stage was filled with them. One would think that Lewis Morris, in his Epic of Hades, had been inspired by this scene, when he wrote—

“ And forthwith on every side  
Rose the thin throng of ghosts . . .  
. . . Shapes  
Of terror, beckoning hands and noiseless feet,  
Flitting from shade to shade.”

Suddenly the whole multitude change in a moment to captivating sirens, dancing round the lonely man, and luring him to the destruction which is typified by the immediately following appearance of a swarm of goblins and evil spirits who finally carry him off to his doom. I have since seen many similar scenes to these, but never anything nearly so impressive.

Of a more intellectual character was a scene I saw later at the Théâtre Français, acted, I think, by Got and Aimée Desclée. The whole piece was merely





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a dialogue, in which the lady never uttered more than two words at intervals in the talk of the man. These were "Oh, Monsieur," but that reply was so varied each time in tone, expression, and gesticulation that a whole volume of meaning was conveyed in each. It was a veritable *tour de force*.

After a talk with M. Eugène Flachet, one of the leading French engineers, at his beautiful place at Asnières, and coming to the conclusion that money could more easily be spent than made in Paris just then, I returned to London much discouraged. I had a further disappointment there in connection with some promised work in Essex, which came to nothing, so that I became very despondent, unreasonably so, for I had youth, health, and strength, and no one depending upon me. Just when, however, my prospects seemed to be at their lowest ebb, some good friends had, unknown to me, in view a position in India for me, but till the matter, which was in doubt at first, was settled, nothing was told to me. I have often thought since of how frequently in that magnificent body of literature, the Bible, we find matter to apply to almost every contingency of life. "For man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain." Surely mine was a vain shadow, which was soon to pass away. And again, the lesson of that sublime dramatic scene in one of the books of the Kings: "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early and gone forth, behold an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master, how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not, for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw ;

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and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

Needless to say, I accepted the position offered, being unable to await better times. Forty years ago, exile to India or the colonies was a very different thing from what it is now, when a cold-weather trip costing little in money, time, or comfort is frequently taken. Then it was more or less a prolonged and expensive mystery. As regards India, those who were destined to return from it at all were expected to do so, yellow perhaps in pocket as to guineas, but also of that unhealthy colour as to complexion, and with a dilapidated temper. None of these results, however, happened to me, but home had to be left, possibly for ever, and professional companions parted from, many of whom I was destined never to see again, for, indeed, the same reason which sent me abroad scattered most of them in various directions.

One of them, a particularly able young fellow, whom I met again over thirty years later in a state of absolute destitution, had meantime risen as high as that was possible in an important colony, being engineer-in-chief to its Government. The demon of drink, however, had laid his awful hands upon him, and when I saw him again, unable to retain any responsible position, he had been working as a house-painter's labourer, and getting lower still, a so-called loan of a sovereign naturally led to my never seeing him again.

Another career, still more varied, but not through his own fault, was that of one who went out to another colony where, as in many of them, most public works were in the hands of the Government. They had no vacancy for an engineer, but the head of the department, seeing his credentials, and wishing to retain him for a future vacancy should it arise, asked my friend

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if he had any objection to be put on the muster-roll meanwhile as a day labourer at a labourer's wages, though his work would be surveying. As the colonial workman's wage was quite as high as the salary he had been able to reach at home before the crash of 1866, and as in the colonies, especially at that early period, dignity counted for nothing, he gladly accepted, and soon succeeded to the expected vacancy. Subsequently, being of a roving disposition, he left and joined a friend on the London Stock Exchange, where he made a great deal of money, enjoying his houses in Brighton and in the Midlands, keeping his yacht, etc. etc. One or two bad speculations, however, sent all this to the winds, and a ranch in Mexico absorbed all his energies, which, ill adapted to this new venture, failed to retrieve his fortunes.

It is said that Shakespeare might have transposed a comma in his well-known adage, if he had been less of an optimist, which would then read, "There's a divinity that shapes our ends rough, hew them how we will." So my roving friend found *his* ends, for soon he was wandering over the face of the earth, earning a precarious penny now and then in reporting on foreign mines, etc. to his old friends on the Stock Exchange. One of his vicissitudes was marriage and a large family, and he had, in the course of his wanderings, lost sight of one of his sons, who, inheriting his father's disposition, had gone abroad into space. At a big hotel in Chicago, however, the father and son were simultaneous inmates for a night, without either knowing of it till afterwards, the former being a visitor and the latter being one of the "boots," to which low estate his necessities had driven him. The last I heard of my friend was that he was in very low water indeed, but in the great variety show of life he may yet again have

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a good turn. Such are the vicissitudes of civil engineering abroad.

Talking of careers, a near relative of mine in the Army had a curious set of fatalities connected with his. He was ordered to China in 1854, just missing the Crimean war, but coming in for some fighting at the siege of Canton. He went out in a sailing-ship which, on its return, was never heard of more. Obligated to take sick leave home later, he returned via Egypt, and as the Suez Canal was not then in existence, he had to travel by two steamers, one to Suez and the other from Alexandria to England. Each of these was wrecked on the following voyage. The same route was taken back again with the same result. Then again he came home with his regiment, when similar losses followed. The next station was the Cape of Good Hope, the vessels taking him there and back also coming to grief. Fortunately total loss of ship and passengers, as in the case of the first catastrophe, did not occur in the later ones, but the sequences were very extraordinary, and, happily for the shipping interests, a home appointment supervening, the young officer spent most of his later years in Great Britain.

In 1866, when I went abroad, many old Peninsular and Waterloo men were still alive and vigorous, whom, with many of their contemporaries, I was to see no more. In customs, too, there was a great change. The shaven face and side whisker were still largely in the majority, a departure from which among the clergy and barristers was unthinkable. The tall hat, though discarded by cricketers, was still general, and it was a real chimney-pot, straight-sided and lofty, not the miserable low curved headgear which is now so called. It was so tall that the suggestion, often followed, was good, that a difference of opinion with a policeman would be effec-

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tively settled by blocking his hat right down on to his shoulders, and so rendering him as useless as an extinguished candle.

Scientific knowledge, even among otherwise fairly educated people, was limited, and many of the beautiful mysteries of life, now dissipated, still held their sway. There were people who could give no explanation of thunder, except as a direct manifestation of Divine displeasure, and ideas as to comets, eclipses, ghosts, etc. were very different from those of the present day. Scientific men, or, as they have been since termed, scientists, had more or less correct views about these things, but there were many people, more especially among the old, who had not imbibed them.

There are now hardly any mysteries left—from some points of view a real loss. It is as if something had dispelled the haze that adds such a charm to our English scenery by throwing its distances into the realms of fantasy which we can fill with what dreamlike glories we please. It is as if garish, shadowless sunshine were everywhere, and sunset's gorgeous draperies had disappeared. Keats writes :

“Do not all charms fly  
At the mere touch of cold philosophy ?  
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven :  
We know her woof, her texture ; she is given  
In the dull catalogue of common things.  
Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,  
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,  
Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine—  
Unweave a rainbow.”

Illustrating the old feeling, there is the story of the Devil in Devonshire, which, however, dates from before the period I have now reached—in the forties, I think—but well within the range of my memory. Nowadays

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the Devil is an evil principle, a symbolical figure, and, according to some, "the survival of the fittest," but to many, in the old days, the absolute bodily personality of the fiend was essential to their conception of the idea. The fiery-red figure, with horns, tail, and hoofs, which medievalism has pictured, still remained. One cold winter's morning, when Devonshire lay deep in snow, it was found, by prints left distinctly in it, that some two-legged creature, taking enormous strides, had traversed the country from sea to sea. Each print was distinctly that of a hoof, and one followed the other at distances apart of from twelve to fourteen feet. But for one fact the track might have been made by a man on an enormous pair of stilts suitably shaped at the foot ; this fact was that the course taken by the gigantic being, which was straight, never deviated where houses, barns, or other large obstructions crossed its path, but apparently went right through them, the snow being entirely untouched all round them. The distance covered in one night rendered the stilt theory also untenable, and the mystery, which was much written about in the few newspapers of the time, has never been cleared up to this day.

# ASIA

## CHAPTER IV

Chance and its effects—The broken engagement—The Abyssinian envoys—Egypt—Red Sea, Indian Ocean, and Ceylon—India: first impressions—Madras—A black panther—On horseback through the jungle—A Highland toast—The railway engineer abroad—and his wife—Approach of monsoon—A tarantula adventure—Showers of insects—A patent umbrella—A frightful catastrophe.

**A** CURIOUS circumstance in connection with my Indian appointment may be mentioned to show how an apparently trivial detail may often lead to a considerable result. There were some four or five other appointments made at the same time by the Madras Railway Co., who were to be my employers, and calling at their London office, I asked by what mail steamer I was expected to start. The reply was that either the next one or the one after would do ; so, not having any special reason for delay, I secured the only berth vacant in the first steamer, the other engineers following in the next ship a fortnight or a month later. On reaching Madras, and stating and verifying my previous experience, I was at once appointed to the entire charge of the only railway construction division then vacant, the filling of which was a matter of urgency. The rest, most of them just as experienced and well qualified as I, but arriving later on the scene, became only assistants to others of my position, and in consequence they were left years behind me in subsequent promotion, owing not so much to

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absence of qualifications as to want of opportunities of showing them.

A much later instance of apparent chance leading to important results occurs to me, that of a friend whom I shall call Professor Proteid. He had some success at home in the particular science which he cultivated, but his health requiring a more genial climate, he emigrated, hoping to turn his knowledge to account in one of the southern colonies. He went out in a sailing ship, and as the vessel was entering the port of destination, a man on board the steam-tug which came alongside, preparatory to towing the ship up the harbour, was reading the local paper. Proteid having been months at sea, and anxious to know what was going on in the world, asked the man to lend him the paper, which was handed up.

After reading the news, his eyes lighted on an advertisement from one of the Colonial Government Offices, asking for applications for an important appointment in the very department of science in which he was specially proficient. But the moment after which no application would be received was within an hour of the time when he saw the advertisement, and the ship was still some distance from the quay, while he did not know how far the office might be from the landing-place. Proteid scribbled an application, collecting his credentials, and almost counted the slow throbs of the little steamer as she struggled on with the huge ship behind her up to the wharf, where with needless care, as he thought, the latter was gradually warped alongside. He had only ten minutes left. Jumping ashore, he hailed a cab and reached the office, panting upstairs and handing in his application to the Secretary within a few seconds of the time named. On the latter asking Proteid how long he had been in the colony, the reply, much to his astonishment, was, "About ten minutes."



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The credentials were found to be better than those of the other candidates, and Proteid was appointed. From this favourable start he rose fairly rapidly to the head of the department, and ultimately became one of the leading scientific men of the Southern Hemisphere, President of the local Royal Society, and an authority far outside his adopted country on the subject of his special study. A man of exceptional attainments, he would, no doubt, have made his mark ultimately, even if the man on the tug-boat had not been reading the paper, but there can be no doubt that this chance circumstance, leading Proteid to his first office, immensely hastened the consummation.

One long sea voyage is very like another in incident, though the surroundings and accessories may be different ; for instance, in the old paddle-wheelers of forty years ago there was practically only one class—the first—no one of what was called respectability travelling second, as in later times. The saloon extended from near midships to the stern, the cabins being at each side, opening immediately on to it, while the captain sat at the head of the long table at meals, and was therefore more or less in touch with all his passengers.

Though under the more rapid conditions of the present day, love-making on board ship is by no means extinct, it was far more favoured as regards opportunity by the slow voyages of the days of which I am writing, and on our good ship many cases, incurable and otherwise, of this glorious lunacy occurred. One in particular gave rise to complications. A gallant officer from India becoming engaged in England, in returning preceded his fiancée to Madras, where the wedding was to take place. She followed with us, but there was also on board a very good-looking young doctor. Whether it was in consequence of

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the many dark corners on deck, or the rhythmical cadence of the swish of the sea, as the bow gently sank into the liquid green of its depths, or the silver moon above us in the evening, or the dazzling canopy of the tropic heavens, or bright Venus herself, whose light in those latitudes is so brilliant as to cast wavering reflections in the calm surface of the ocean—which of these assisted the doctor's fascinating ways no one knows, but before we reached our destination he was substituted for the captain. How the matter was explained to the expectant bridegroom, who, all unknowing, came on board to meet the lady, I know not, though the situation was sufficiently embarrassing; but as I met the doctor and his wife frequently later, it is to be supposed that nothing of a very desperate character, such as some of us expected, ever came off.

About this time was the memorable war undertaken owing to the refusal of that old barbarian, King Theodore of Abyssinia, to release British envoys, and to indignities offered to them. An army under Sir Robert Napier, afterwards created Lord Napier of Magdala, was sent to recover them, which was done after a brilliant campaign. Before war was declared, however, further envoys were sent, and were on board our ship, and thereby hangs a small tale. A fellow-passenger opposite me at dinner, one of the first few days out, said, addressing me and those near me, "I am told there are fellows on board going out to negotiate with that Abyssinian brute. I suppose he will flay them alive, or chop their heads off at least, when he gets hold of them. Aren't they fools?" A man next me, with a quiet manner but determined face, smiled and said, "Possibly! You may be interested, however, to hear, if that be the case, that the Queen has made a fool of me, for I am one of them."

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The construction of the Suez Canal, which was subsequent to this voyage, though facilitating travel in many ways, has deprived the more modern traveller of the advantage, unless he goes out of his way for the purpose, of seeing Alexandria and Cairo. We passed through these, crossing Egypt by land, and thus gaining our first glimpses of Eastern life. I have never forgotten the colossal calm of the mysterious face of the Sphinx, backed by the eternal Pyramids, looking as if the lost history of the great dead centuries had been enacted in its awful presence, but would never be revealed. The people who carved such a face as that must have been great.

So many people go to Cairo now for the winter, that it has become almost as cockney as Brighton of old, and the frequency of the brown turbaned face is relieved by others which remind one of Park Lane and Piccadilly. Then, the all-pervading Cook, though he may have been dreaming in his youth of future tourists led by his guiding hand to the uttermost parts of the morning, had not been heard of, and Cairo, though, of course, well known to travellers and Egyptologists, was still a mystery, and something that might be written about. That time, however, is now past, and I shall not go over well-trodden ground in describing that dusty, donkey-crowded city, with its jumble of Oriental and Western life.

We sped on across the desert by rail, stopping, apparently for no reason, at numerous stations, where we got out to warm ourselves at great wood fires nearly surrounded by what appeared to us a crowd of Bedouin Sheiks, having the same object in view. Winter in Egypt at night is bitterly cold, and the railway carriages were not then heated.

Reaching Suez, the mail steamer on which we embarked brought us younger passengers into India,

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so to say, at once. The punkahs were going, and Indian servants were flitting about in their noiseless way at our slightest command. Old Indians returning to military or civil duty, and feeling themselves getting back to the languorous East, reclined in their long chairs with the projecting arms supporting the occupant's legs, and now and then was heard the cry of "*Ag lao!*" "Bring fire," at which call a smart native boy would appear with a light for the sahib's cheroot.

One moonlight night, in order to reach the forecastle and see the phosphoric foam at the bow, and ignorant of native habits, I walked across what I thought was a spread-out sail or something of the kind on deck. It appeared to be rather knobby, and became knobbier as I went on, then stifled cries arose, evidently more in anger than in sorrow, for I had trampled on the heads and faces of a lot of lascars asleep, and covered up to shield their faces from the effects of the moon—effects known at the time of David (see Psalm cxxi. 6), "The sun shall not smite thee by day nor the moon by night." An awful row followed, which I had to settle in exemplary damages. But I had learnt something.

Farewell to the anæmic sun of the north, for notwithstanding that it was the cool season, the Red Sea was quite warm enough for us, and from fiery morn to sweltering eve we easily fell into the Eastern customs of letting the willing native servants do everything for us that was possible, and at night, having screened off half the deck for the ladies' use, we slept, as the French say, *à la belle étoile*, while, as in the *Odyssey*—

"All night the ship clave onward,  
Till the dawn upsoared."

Relief came, however, on getting into the open sea beyond Aden, where, though the prodigal sun still shed

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down his powerful rays, the sea-breeze from the vast and open south tempered them considerably, and slight exercise became possible. Point de Galle was then the Ceylon port of call for the mails to further India and to China, but it was not greatly different from the Colombo of to-day, except that the hotels were less palatial, and rickshaws, which are a comparatively recent importation from Japan, did not then exist in the island.

Madras was soon reached, and the novel experience of landing in a Masula boat encountered. The mail steamers do not call there now, owing to the landing difficulties and to the accessibility of the city by rail from other ports, which later times have brought. There was no harbour in 1866, and the surf, even in calm weather, rolls in enormous waves, breaking with a thundering noise a considerable distance from the shore. The Masula boat, forty or fifty feet long, is built for the purpose, of bamboos and leather, and is manned by a special caste of men trained, and extraordinarily expert, in the navigation of it. The boat, when nearing shore, is guided on to the top of a wave heading for the beach, the skill of the men, with their long spoon-ended oars, being shown by their keeping their craft, loaded with passengers and luggage, at exactly the same speed as that of the wave, and strictly at right angles to it, any deviation from this leading inevitably to a capsize and to a dinner-party for sharks. The momentum carries the Masula boat high and dry on to the beach, when all the occupants who do not hold on like an attack of influenza are thrown into a jumble of other unwary passengers and of boxes and portmanteaus, so that the astonished traveller is literally hurled into India. All this, no doubt, more or less distracts the new-comer's attention from the boatmen, or he would be still more

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startled to notice that their clothing principally consists of a bit of string.

In this, they give the new arrival a wrong impression of India generally, for the native costume is decorous in the extreme, flowing robes being its usual characteristic. The female dress is perhaps the most graceful known in all the world, and is about as unlike that of a fashion plate as it is possible to conceive. The sensible Hindoo women having adopted this costume, nobody knows when, have never changed it. The head, arms, and feet are bare, except for jewellery, the bust covered, and below it, beyond a gap showing a few inches of polished bronze skin, the body is draped in a picturesque folding garment. The *sari*, which is a piece of stuff several yards long, is gracefully thrown round the whole body, enveloping it more or less according to the season. The colours, even among the lower orders, are always quiet and harmonious, blues and greys predominating. The working women as well as the men carry their loads, often very heavy, on their heads, which gives them an upright carriage unknown in the West. It is curious that on the Malabar coast women of the best and most respectable classes are wholly uncovered above the waist, while, strange to say, the only exception to this is among those whose lives are not so irreproachable. The men all over India, except the coolie or labouring class, are amply clothed, and the coolies wear everything that decency requires.

The first impression of the natives is that one is indistinguishable from another, their faces seeming to be all alike, which often leads, at first, to blame being given to one servant for neglecting orders given to another. But better acquaintance shows that there is quite as much variety in black as in white faces, and perhaps more in their complexions. A squatter in Australia

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many years later told me that there was an infinite variety in the faces of sheep, which appear to those who are not of the bush to be exactly the same. In fact, he said he could see likenesses to some of his friends in different sheep.

One of the first impressions of the native is that of the servants at the hotel, where naturally the new arrival makes his first stay. And the surprise is how noiseless they are, being barefooted. They simply glide about like ghosts, especially as they are robed in white, as all proper ghosts are ; but, unlike them, they are good at providing one with material comforts. In fact they are so rapid and neat in their movements as to be easily the first in the world in the calling of waiters. At a dinner-party every guest brings his own servant, who stands behind his chair, and as he is supposed to know his master's tastes, the double object is attained of gratifying these tastes, and of giving no trouble to the hostess. Sometimes one is aware of a sort of half-subdued contention at the sideboard. This is the struggle between the various servants, each trying to get first his master's favourite brand of wine or other luxury.

But to return to my story. Madras covers an enormous area, as well it may, for in the European quarter all bungalows stand in their own grounds, approached by carriage drives, for nobody who is white in colour walks. Even the shops at which Europeans chiefly deal, though kept by natives or Eurasians, are like stately mansions, and are approached through trees and shrubbery. One may drive several miles from shop to shop. Here you alight, and the salaaming white-robed shop-server asks first if the sahib will take a brandy-and-soda, which he usually does if his conscience, justified by the probable amount of his expenditure, enables him to do so. Of course, I am speaking of forty years ago,

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and there may be now Indian Whiteley's, Harrod's, and Army and Navy Stores, where less generous and antiquated customs prevail. My purchases, however—economy being the prevailing motive—were largely done in the native bazaar, which is as crowded as the other quarter is scattered, with the usual chaffering and bargaining already described to death in Eastern travels.

Among other sights I went to see the Zoo, which I mention for a special reason, as such a proceeding is hardly otherwise worth record. I thus made further acquaintance with various classes of animals behind bars, which I was destined to meet not long after on more or less friendly terms without this separation; and here I might say that they look much larger in the jungle than in the cage. It may be wondered why a Zoo exists in Madras, with sundry wild beasts freely ranging about just beyond the outer suburbs, seeking whom they may devour, though the country is not exactly "yellow with tigers," a picturesque expression applied to it by one of my new office comrades in order to test my credulity. But the special reason above mentioned for my visit to the Zoo was not to anticipate, but to see there what is exceedingly rare, that is a black panther. It was like an enormous black cat, but when looked at at a certain angle, spots like those of an ordinary animal of this species could be discerned gleaming through the glossy coat.

Having made all necessary purchases, I had to proceed up country to my district by railway as far as that could carry me. Railway travelling in India is readily taken to by its inhabitants, for business, pleasure and religious pilgrimages, which are numerous. The third-class carriages, in which males and females are generally separated, are crowded almost to suffocation, the occupants talking loudly and incessantly both among them-



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selves and to their friends at the numerous stations, while all the colours in the rainbow and combinations of them are represented in the dresses. High caste men—for it is a mistake to suppose that religious caste denotes social rank—are employed to distribute water at stations to the weary passengers suffering from heat and thirst, so that if a Brahmin requires it, there is no fear of contamination. Ordinarily elsewhere, this difficulty is got over by the water-bearer emptying his earthenware pot by a stream of water into the hollowed palm of the kneeling recipient, who thus skilfully guides the cooling liquid to his mouth with hardly the loss of a drop. Caste does not separate people, at all events in Southern India, to any great degree, except in matters of food and drink.

The rail being left, the rest of the journey for some hundreds of miles was made on horseback through the jungle, halting at night either at the bungalows of my colleagues who were constructing the nearer parts of the railway, or where these could not be reached, at what are called *dāk* bungalows, which, there being no suitable accommodation for Europeans in the intervals between the large towns, a beneficent Government provides at suitable points, usually near a village, where supplies can be had.

Bullock carts carried my furniture and other belongings, and as, owing to their slow pace, I was compelled to start them off each morning some hours before it was necessary for me and my *ghorawallah* or horse-keeper to leave, we were often alone, and occasionally at fault as to our way. Much of the road lay through tangled jungle, of the luxuriance of which those who have not been in the tropics have no conception. Feathery bamboo and Palmyra palms abound, the tall areca-nut tree rising straight as an

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arrow, without a branch, and as thin as a fishing-rod, to a great height, then throwing out at the top its ostrich plumes of verdure, all rising from a mass of brightly blossomed undergrowth ; while gorgeous parroquets and noisy mynas contribute their quota of colour and sound, and thousands of ortolans, which the Romans thought such a delicacy for the table, swarm above.

As the night begins to fall, the glittering fireflies dart about like so many dancing stars, and imagination, if not reality, peoples the forest with roaming beasts of prey, giving an anxiety more intense than in less infested countries, to see the friendly lights ahead which indicate shelter and protection for the night. But the luxuriant vegetation, and especially the towering palms, are—contrary to the popular view—not characteristic of India as a whole. These are only found within about two hundred miles of the coast, where only also, as a rule, is the long coarse grass which in pictures is always shown as jungle in which big game is supposed to lurk.

The interior is largely open plains, sometimes undulating, with tree clumps or *topes*, as they are called. I remember after my return talking to a manager of a diorama in England which was supposed to represent the scenes of the great Mutiny which took place far inland. In these, palm trees were liberally shown, and when I pointed out the inaccuracy, the showman said that palm trees were so associated in the British public mind with India, that it would never do to alter it. If this were done, he said, it would be thought that the artist had never been to India, which indeed was evidently the case.

The interior of the country, in my case, consisted largely of the vast black cotton soil plains of the Deccan and Ceded Districts where my work lay. The cultiva-

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tion of cotton in India is very ancient. Herodotus, in the *Thalia*, says: "And certain trees there bear wool instead of fruit that in beauty and quality excels that of sheep, and the Indians make their clothing from these trees," which also shows that in Herodotus's time the Greeks did not know of this material.

At one of my halts for the night, at a bungalow of one of the engineers, I chanced to meet many of my future colleagues who had collected there to celebrate his birthday. He was a Scotsman. Now my extensive experience of that race does not at all justify the general opinion that his countrymen, as a rule, are miserly, or have larger bumps of acquisitiveness than other nations, though it is stated that St. Andrew was chosen as the patron saint of Scotland because he was the only one of the apostles who knew where the loaves and fishes were. However, this particular Scotsman was miserly enough, and the extensive hospitality that he was forced to exercise on this occasion was a great trial, which, I am afraid, was the chief object of the visit, though he did all he could to look as if he enjoyed it. But when, after dinner, the guests all got up to drink his health, standing with one foot on their chairs and the other on the table, Highland fashion, and then threw his glasses over their left shoulders, the struggle between our host's politeness and his agony must have been fearful. The clean sweep of the larder, cellar, and pantry, which this boisterous revelry entailed, was all the more disastrous to the close-fisted Scot, as, being hundreds of miles from any shop, he could not effect any restoration for a considerable time. He must have devoutly wished, in bidding a glad farewell to his visitors the next morning, that he had been born on a 29th February, so as to be congratulated only once in four years. The drinking

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custom just mentioned, it is said, dates from the time of the toasts given to "King Charlie over the water" at Jacobite gatherings in the Highlands.

Here, at my first acquaintance with the typical constructing engineer abroad, and after meeting him since in many other lands, I may say that he is *sui generis* among his craft. He differs in many respects from the type I had left at home. Sunburnt, bearded, with the pipe ever in his mouth, a daring rider, full of energy, exhaustless in resource when difficulties arise, hospitable to the last degree, and full of queer anecdote, he has little tolerance for fussy namby-pambyism in his superiors or his comrades, and expects his men to work as hard as himself, with due allowance for the various disabilities of the races with which he has to deal. Nor is his wife, when he has one, which is seldom, less equal to the task which circumstances have put before her. Brought up probably among the comforts of an English home, she is ready to endure a life such as the following narrative illustrates, dwelling in tents or wooden huts with gaping sides, with rough food and all kinds of privations, yet cheerful and hopeful through it all, for it is the home. And, as Ruskin says, "Wherever a true wife comes, this home is always around her. The stars only may be over her head; the glow-worm in the night-cold grass may be the only fire at her foot; but home is yet wherever she is." Such as these approach more to the ideal of Wordsworth's "perfect woman nobly planned" than to that of the imperfect man imagined by Plato and the suffragettes.

Of course, I have come across several exceptions to this type, but there is no doubt that among men whose fortunes lead them to the wild places of the earth, there are many whose best deeds are inspired by the patient

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and hopeful women who share their trials and bid them ever to be of good cheer.

According to the custom of the construction department of the Madras Railway, a certain sum was granted to every engineer appointed to a district, with which he was to build his own bungalow on his own plan, which system worked well as long as there was no change in the occupancy of the position. In my case, however, an engineer had been appointed to the district shortly before I arrived, and, having a wife and children, with which accessories at that time I was not blessed, had built a habitation of some size, and, curious to say, as the reader will presently see, the existence of this family and, consequently, the size of the bungalow was the means of saving me from a terrible death.

This engineer was transferred at short notice to some other duty before occupying his bungalow, and caused the vacancy to which my early arrival in Madras enabled me to succeed. A late arrival in India, and almost as inexperienced as I, he had built the structure with rough stone cemented by mud. This is good enough for a temporary building, as this was to be, if he had protected it all round, as is usual, with a verandah, so that the monsoon rains could not reach the walls; but this had been done only in the front. There was a large central living-room and several bedrooms at each side of it, the kitchen and servants' quarters, etc. being, according to Eastern custom, in a separate building. On my arrival I decided, quite by chance, to occupy one of the bedrooms on the west side, leaving the eastern wing entirely empty.

The elemental grandeur of the approach of the monsoon, which was now imminent, has never, to my knowledge, been adequately described, and this grandeur appears to be most conspicuous where the total rainfall

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is the least, and where, as is generally the case, it falls in greater quantities within short intervals. In the Ceded Districts this is the case, the rainfall for the whole year being very scanty, but when it does occur, coming down not like cats and dogs, but like elephants and hippopotami, at intervals, for a few weeks.

The first warnings are violent whirlwinds, called in India "devils," which, moving slowly along, catch up the six months' dust, or any comparatively light objects, and send them whirling up into the air to a great height. I have said *comparatively* light objects, for if any structure not of considerable stability or weight is, by chance, encountered, some of it is sure to be carried upward. Before I knew the local application of the term, I remember being astonished by a friend coming to me with the news that a devil had just carried away his verandah. The incongruity of such a personage causing anything to go heavenwards is sufficiently striking.

Another premonition is the swarms of insects, which, by the way, seem to be the only creatures who live out their life in the enjoyment of the season and hours that suit them. *Figurez vous*, as the French say, the merry mosquito, who sings as he earns his living, and carefully resting by day in one of those particular folds of the hung-up mosquito curtain which will be inward at night, gloats as he wakes over his coming victim, and plunging at his exposed surfaces, gambols about with tumultuous joy till break of day. Or the swift tarantula spider. This small wild beast's body is about the size of a plum, with a head about that of a cherry, while his numerous hairy legs are each as long as a dinner fork. He is, for his size, surely the most rapid of the Almighty's creatures, and can reach his destination almost with the velocity of a rifle bullet.

I remember, if I may digress here, being, later on, at

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a fashionable dinner party in an Indian garrison town. Ladies in smart toilettes and men in uniform, and other delights, sat round the table, not at the small cliquy tables of the present day set archipelago fashion, and,

“The lamps shone o’er fair women and brave men,”

while the happy vintage began lightly to touch their brains, when from the ceiling, suddenly, there fell a tarantula on to the centre of the table with a dull thud. While he was making up his mind where to dart, the ladies screamed and scattered as if a bombshell had fallen, and the effect was like that of a mouse at a meeting of suffragettes, only more so. The creature darted at lightning speed across the table and escaped. Truly that fearful creature had a moment of ecstasy, if the sense of being master of the situation affected him.

But to return to the jungle bungalow. The insects that worried me most were exceedingly minute, and kept falling like a mist from the thatched roof above. I got used to this after a while as a general thing, but could not stand it at meal times, as soup and insects, mutton and insects, curry and insects, and beer and insects became monotonous ; so I rigged up a spare tablecloth tied at its four corners by cords to distant rafters, in order to form a sort of awning over the dining-table, which was a great success.

Following the whirlwinds, for several successive afternoons, magnificent cloud forms roll up in masses, portentous of storm. The scene is recalled by Edwin Arnold’s *Light of Asia*, where the fiends of hell obscured nature to keep the truth from Buddha, by

“Blasts

Of demon armies clouding all the wind,  
With thunder and with blinding lightning flung  
In jagged javelins of purple wrath  
From splitting skies.”

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These gradually pass away each evening without rain, the heat being stifling, while that great artist, the tropical sun, fiery in his splendour, flings about his brush unsparingly upon the angry and retreating cloud masses. Heavier and heavier, day by day, this happens, when at length down comes the rain in torrential sheets, the lightning being so incessant that, if it were calm enough to do so, a book at night might be read by it, while the dull roar of the thunder is almost as continuous.

The first consequence of the actual advent of the rain was leakage from the roof, some of which, at night, fell into my patent suspended tablecloth hung by its corners, and when, bellying down by the weight, it was nearly full, one of the ropes gave way, and I was awakened by the crash of quite a large bathful of water deluging the floor and running into the adjoining rooms.

But this was only a curtain-raiser, so to speak, for the great Drury Lane sensational drama, nearly indeed a tragedy, which followed the next night. The rain and thunder continued, but far above their roar, near midnight, came a fearful and deafening crash, as it might be,

“Tremendo  
Jupiter ipse ruens tumultu.”

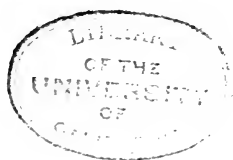
Starting up from bed and rushing to the room door, I found the whole of the bungalow in ruins and its roof on the ground, except the room I had just left, the adjoining one, and the front verandah. Hearing the noise, and frightened at the possible insecurity of their own quarters, the servants, who were over a dozen in number, came rushing to the verandah, which being supported on wooden posts was the only safe place. As there was no habitation, even of the mud variety of which a Hindoo village consists, within many miles,



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we had all of us to crouch in the verandah, shivering with cold, for the rain brings what seems, from the contrast with the previous weather, excessive cold. As the building was uninhabitable we picked up, at daylight, the remains of the furniture, and loading up a few bullock carts made for the nearest *dák* bungalow as a temporary refuge.

Fortunately what was termed an out bungalow, which was to be for my use when visiting the further end of my district, was nearly finished, and having had it built from my own plans, I was confident it was more stable than that which I had left. With some additions I made this my head-quarters, and as it was close to a native village it was more convenient for supplies.



## CHAPTER V

A native visit—Travelling—Jungle life—Staff and postal arrangements—Jungle pests—The engineer's work—Hot winds—Jackals and hyenas—Indian rivers—Native expedients—First appearance of the locomotive—English navvies—Afghans.

SHORTLY after arriving at my new quarters I received a formal visit of welcome from the *Reddi*, or native headman of the village, with his satellites. Sitting all round they paid their compliments, each of the principal ones placing garlands round my neck. All the conversation was, of course, through my head native clerk as an interpreter. Here I may say that, in contrast to most other provinces in India, in the Madras Presidency a great many native officials and servants speak English fairly well. This arises from the fact of there being such a variety of languages. Tamil, Telegu, Canarese, and others having each a limited area, so that few Europeans learn them, and as Hindustani (*Urdu*) is only, as a rule, understood by Mussulmans, who are in the minority, English rather than the latter is the more frequent means of communication between the European and the native.

The visit was embarrassing and long, for necessarily there were few subjects in common, and my ignorance of native etiquette prolonged it almost to desperation. Eastern politeness in this matter assumes that the inferior in position—in this case the visitor—is entirely at the disposal of the superior, and it is for the latter to terminate the visit by words meaning "there is leave"—that is, leave to go. You might as well be whistling

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jigs to the pyramid of Cheops and expecting it to dance, as to get these men to move without the releasing word. At length the clerk, realizing that I was not prolonging the interview for mere enjoyment, gave me the hint. Does not many a hostess of more civilized lands long for a similar weapon by which the bores and the bored might be as easily separated ?

In visiting his district the engineer almost always rides, followed almost as quickly on foot by his *ghora-wallah*, or groom, for he is trained to speed, and hard riding in such a climate as that of India is exceptional. If for any reason the horse is not available, the *munchiel* is often used up country in Southern India. This is a long bamboo pole from which a hammock is slung, and it is borne on the shoulders of four coolies, two at each end, four others running alongside to relieve their fellows at intervals. The motion is the perfection of ease, as the spring of the hammock, the resilience of the bamboo, and the elasticity of the bodies of the bearers combine to soften the motion much more than the C springs of a barouche over the best paved road. The bearers go at a slinging trot, singing a monotonous but melodious chant, which might be represented freely by this :

“The Lord Sahib is light, and we carry him well  
Over jungle and plain, over hill and thro’ dell,  
We sing as we go, the ever same song,  
As we all jog along, jog along, jog along.”

The Telegu language, in which my *munchiel* bearers sang, is full of the sounds corresponding to our letter U, so that when sung softly it has the effect of a *berceuse*, which, combined with the motion and the heat, soon wraps the traveller in soft and dreamy slumbers. When the Lord Sahib weighs eighteen stone, as he may

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occasionally do, the verse begins as above, with, in that case, one of those more or less dove-coloured lies which are not wholly unknown in higher circles at home, such as "I am delighted to see you," "Not at home," etc. Hamlet was a true observer when he spoke of the easiness of lying.

There are plenty of accounts of Indian life published, but they are mostly limited to the experiences of military men and civilians who, though travelling on duty through the jungle occasionally, have their head-quarters in garrison towns, while others, whose big-game killing exploits form the subject of their books, are so occupied with this exciting work that Indian rural life, except in so far as it may be connected with their sport, is passed by unnoticed.

Most of my Indian life was entirely in the jungle. My staff at this time consisted of several clerks, two sentries or peons in uniform and armed, who were on guard at night, for I had charge of a chest of the company's money, and an apothecary or dresser to attend to illness or injuries. The apothecaries, one of whom was attached to each district, were good enough for simple ailments, and some of them fairly skilful; but one of my colleagues spoke of his, in the words of Hudibras, as one of those

"Whose deleterious med'cines  
That whosoever took, is dead since."

Besides these there were inspectors of works, and *tappal* runners or postmen, whose duties, as we were away from the ordinary mail routes, were to run from district to district with the letters for the staff, according to a fixed time table. Each runner carried a pole, at the end of which were bells, which had a double object. They could be heard at a great distance, serving as a

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warning to have our mail matter ready, and raising our expectations as to news from the dear old land at home. A second reason was to frighten wild beasts and snakes from the path of the barefooted runner, though I have heard it said that in districts where a man-eating tiger exists the bells have an exactly opposite effect, the wily beast finding his prey by their sound.

Every member of this staff was a native, as were also, of course, the servants, and though most of the higher-class ones could speak English enough for their duties, naturally there were few subjects in common on which we could converse. The nearest European was thirty or forty miles off, and the bungalow was several miles from the main road by which travellers occasionally passed. The loneliness was therefore terrible, hard work, of which I had plenty, being the only relief. There was a fair amount of big-game shooting, but, except on occasions to be presently noted, I had no time for this. It must be understood that those who expect to shoot big game must give all their time to it, and a keen sportsman will spend days and days tracking a single tiger. Such quest was not for me. Yes, the loneliness was terrible, such as before then or since I have never experienced. Thoreau, the American recluse, in his self-chosen retreat in the woods, said that since the astronomers had discovered that the solar system, including the earth, was in the midst of the milky way, he felt no longer lonely. But I am afraid I could not bring myself up to that extreme intimacy with the stars which the philosopher of the simple life seems to have attained.

Occasionally there was an interchange of visits with colleagues, but distance made them infrequent, and I often found a sort of company in the cheery and harmless lizard who seemed to like sprawling upon the white-washed wall and chirping his sympathy. Not so pleasant

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are the eye flies, which, minute as pins' heads, hover in hundreds about one's eyes, every now and again making a rush at that sensitive organ, and continuing their attentions till sundown, when they are promptly relieved by the ever-joyous mosquito. Cobras, which sometimes come into the houses, scorpions, leeches, and jungle fleas have been so much written about in travellers' tales that I shall only say, like the Queen of Sheba, that the half was not told me. As to the last-mentioned pests, I read the other day of a sojourner in a similar case to mine driving a cow through his bungalow sitting-rooms and bedrooms with the object, which was successful, of her attracting and carrying away, at all events for a time, some of the superfluous inhabitants. As George Stephenson, the Northumbrian inventor of the locomotive, said, when asked what would happen if cattle strayed on the rails, "It would be bad for the coo."

The white ants devoured their way through almost everything. The leather of my boots, notwithstanding the blacking, was evidently a *bonne bouche*, possibly from the similarity to native beef-steak. Thinking to circumvent them, I tied the boots at night to a string suspended from a roof beam, but they climbed the walls and came along the beam, descending the string. The string, however, being also toothsome, they ate it through, and the whole fell with a crash to the ground. But the boots were saved.

The country through which the district extended was mostly what are called the black cotton soil plains, the soil being as black and nearly as fruitful as ink. The vast undulating surface covered with the diminutive cotton plant, rolling away monotonously to the blue distance, and broken only by small rocky hills, gave an impression of immensity that almost amounted to the

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sublime. During the rains the black soil is absolutely impassable for riding or driving, so that it is fortunate they are of very short duration.

Outdoor work, riding over the district, was done from daybreak, or gunfire, as it was called in India, to 9 or 10 a.m. in the hot season and in the afternoon, the midday hours being utilized for office work. Fortunately, the formation of a book club by the engineers helped the evenings through. When the fierce hot wind blew as from a furnace, outdoor work in the afternoon could not be done, and it was only possible to exist inside by shutting up everything but the windward windows, which were covered by what are called *cus-cus* tatties, or blinds made of fibre, kept wet by drips from perforated water-pots hung above them. These cooled the winds to bearable point. Fortunately, these winds are only periodical, and do not begin till about 11 a.m., though lasting till long past sundown, and by sleeping on the roof or in the verandah a comparatively cool night is obtainable. I have since made acquaintance with hot winds in South Africa and in Australia, but, though bad enough, they are to those of India, as regards intensity and persistence, as skim milk is to the brandy of commerce.

Physical geography atlases show the maximum isothermal line, zigzagging across the globe and touching the regions of which I am speaking. It is not only the great heat which disturbs sleep at night, but the cry of the jackals, of which there are many in the cotton plains roaming in packs. Surely it is the most dismal, heart-rending sound known. The jackal, judging from his mode of expressing his feelings, must be the pessimist of the wilds. One of them begins with a mournful wail, another follows, until the whole troop join in a dirge of despair, the almost human character of the voice driving

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the listener almost into a state of despondency. No Wagner could imitate it, even with an orchestra of 'cellos and oboes. The cry of the so-called laughing hyena, which is a more solitary beast and was often heard also at night, is little better. I often met packs of wolves in my rides, but they never paid any hostile attention to me.

The great characteristic of railway construction work in India is the enormous rivers which have to be crossed, these being often twice or thrice the width of the Thames at London, but, unlike that waterway, having an almost dry bed at certain seasons for several months together. At other times of the year they often carry torrents of water which would sweep away everything but the very strongest structures in bridge piers. In order to economise carriage of steel and other material for the great bridges which are thus required, their construction is usually delayed till the line is practically completed up to the site, when the rails are continued across the dry bed of the river, so that the material carried by trains may be delivered for the bridge and the works beyond. So long are these dry periods, that not infrequently the railway is even opened for public traffic with the trains running through the river beds pending the completion of the larger bridges.

It is perhaps unnecessary to say that natives, including women, do all the construction work of the Indian railways. I had nearly as many women as men at shifting earthwork, the men digging it out and the women carrying it in baskets on their heads to where it was required. Native artisans are also skilful, the carpenters having an advantage over Europeans in using three limbs in their work. Being exceedingly lithe and supple, the carpenter seizes the wood on the bench with one uplifted foot, which is as grasping as a Jew money-lender, having his two hands free for the plane or chisel.



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On account of the cheapness of labour all sorts of makeshift contrivances are used instead of mechanical power, as we know it. Man's and bullocks' work do everything in conjunction with the inevitable bamboo. India is unthinkable without bullocks and bamboos. A special instance of this is the raising of water from wells and from bridge foundations by the bullock *môt*. A great bag of hides lifts the water by means of a rope carried over a pulley to a pair of bullocks, who work down a steep inclined plane, thus utilizing their weight as well as their power. Another means of doing the same work by men's weight only is the *picotta*. This is formed by a tall bamboo fixed upright, to which are slung by ropes two or three cross bamboos bound tightly together. The attachment is in the middle of the cross-piece, which is thus free to swing vertically like a see-saw. From one end hangs a bucket dipping into the well, while an agile native, steadying himself by a light handrail attached to the cross-bar, works the latter alternately up and down by running along the bar, thus lifting the full bucket, which is emptied by another coolie into the channel, and dropping it down again by running back along the bar in the reverse direction.

The first appearance of the locomotive in the jungle is like that of the foul fiend himself to the unsophisticated native. The engine appears long before the opening of the railway, it being used by the construction engineer as soon as the rails are laid, so as to draw wagons carrying various materials for the works, and also frequently ballast. Hence, as "bandy" is the generic name for any vehicle in Southern India, the terrible machine soon acquired its name of "Ballaster-Bandy," which stuck to it for all time, even when used in the regular traffic after the line was opened. I well remember, on one occasion, a great crowd of villagers

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assembling at the rail end awaiting the first arrival of the expected monster, concerning which village rumour had been busy. It moved up quietly enough and stopped, upon which the natives, who are as curious as cows, thronged round it and almost under its wheels.

Here was the driver's opportunity ; so he suddenly let off steam in all directions. The phenomenon, so familiar to us, of the white and loud hissing steam, was absolutely new to the unsuspecting coolies, who were scattered like a bursting rocket.

When railways were first introduced into India, the English contractors thought that English navvies were essential to their construction, and they were accordingly imported, but it was soon found that the climate was unsuitable for European manual work, and though the native could not rival the white man in the amount of work done, his wages were small enough to overbalance this, and so white labour ceased. The English railway navvy of the mid-Victorian period belongs to an extinct species. He was very different from the labourer of the present day, when railway construction has practically ceased at home, and machinery has so largely supplanted manual effort. He had the thews and sinews of a prize-fighter, and an enormous capacity for work, and, unfortunately, at times for drink. I suppose it was the latter propensity which led to an order by the Madras Government censuring some of the navvies for seizing and carrying off some native policemen, whose sense of duty led them to interfere in a drunken row. It was only a few years before my time, and it was said that each navvy took two constables, one under each arm, and chucked them outside the railway fences.

Owing to a scarcity of local labour at one time, some Afghans, Pathans, and Kandaharis were sent to me from the North—fine fellows, with almost Italian com-

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plexions, and good workers, but very quarrelsome, being always armed with dangerous-looking knives. Their features, or sometimes the absence of them, showed that they usually settled their differences by private enterprise without troubling Government legal machinery. Apart from these little scimmages among themselves, with which it was wise policy not to interfere, I found them easy to manage, as indeed I have found in dealing since with semi-civilized races in various other parts of the world, when rigid justice is dealt out to them.

## CHAPTER VI

Village amusements and customs—A swindler—A tiger hunt—Big-game casualties—Cheetahs—A coroner's verdict—Native English—Native characteristics—Instance of native devotion told to author by Lord Roberts—Total eclipse of the sun: marvellous effects—The Polish prince—An awkward misunderstanding—Antelope shooting—The Malabar coast—A celebrated author's visit—A tent collapse.

**T**O return to my lonely camp and my village neighbours. The amusements of the latter were largely composed of dances and dramas. The dancers are dressed much more amply and with more trinkets than any other native women display. The plays take place in some open village space by moonlight. The performance is interminable, beginning early in the afternoon and going on past midnight to early morning. I left the first and last I ever attended at the end of Act XIII, and it was then going as strong as a torpedo-boat destroyer. Not knowing the language, I could not say whether it was a melodrama or a problem play, but probably not the former, which is inconceivable without scenery, real cabs, water, horse-racing, etc. It seemed to be very funny, judging by the shouts of laughter greeting the numerous jokes.

Some of the natives play a kind of whist scarcely differing from ours, except that the order of play is to the right instead of to the left. Some are wonderfully keen at chess, and I remember hearing of a good game being played, not, however, at this simple village, by a blindfolded native who was required, in addition to

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this mental strain on his memory and skill, to say how many pebbles hit him on his naked back, these being thrown at him from behind at uncertain intervals during the game.

Ingenuity in swindling is often carried to as high perfection in India as in the most enlightened and Christian countries. One man went through our village with an old Crosse and Blackwell pickle-bottle label which had the Royal Arms engraved upon it. Exhibiting this, the words of which were, of course, unintelligible to the simple villagers, he passed himself off as one of the Queen's tax-collectors, and by asking only a small amount from each householder, and by avoiding the more intelligent, he amassed a considerable sum before he was found out.

One of the many travelling bands of jugglers who visited us had, in addition to the ordinary accessories, a full-grown "woman tiger," as it was curiously described to me by my native clerk. The animal was not in a cage, but simply held by two chains attached to a collar round its neck, one at each side, the ends of which were held taut at some distance by groups of three or four men. It glared and showed its dangerous-looking teeth, uttering angry growls, and if it had the knowledge which Bacon says is Power—that is to say, knowledge of its own—we should have had a rough time of it. No doubt it had been caught in its innocent infancy, otherwise the celebrated question as regards the apple in a dumpling as to how it got there might well have been asked. It was feeling its strength, however, and tugged at its chains with such vigour that, I must own, I felt a little relieved when the performance was at an end.

But I had a more exciting interview with a less trammelled beast of the same kind later, when, on an Easter

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holiday, accompanied by some European friends, we sought him in his own haunts. We slept in the jungle without tents the night before the fray, and while doing so, actually had some of our provisions eaten by jackals or other beasts of the forest. The trees were so thick above that the sun hardly penetrated through them, and the heat was much moderated accordingly ; but there was room below to manœuvre the attack which was in hand, for in the south of India tigers are not shot from the safe eminence of an elephant's back, but on foot. Native trackers were employed to trace the beast's marks, and it is extraordinary how this is done. We saw a dusty surface covered with imprints of the domestic village buffalo, bullocks, goats, and other animals and birds, yet the marks of the four paws of the tiger were so distinct to them, while so utterly confused and scattered to the uninstructed eye, that no definite course taken by the beast could be ascertained without the trackers' help.

We were posted in groups, each with a spare rifle held by a coolie, while a band of natives, covering a considerable breadth of the jungle, with tom-toms, instruments like tambourines, cymbals, and all kinds of music, making day hideous, were to drive the tiger across the line of fire, and we were to do the rest. It is said that when looking for a tiger you feel you cannot get enough of him, and generally when found you get rather too much. This, however, was not our case. Long anxious hours were passed, when at last the approaching din and the excitement became intense, and the hand went instinctively to the trigger. Never in a long life of many dangers and vicissitudes did I feel such a stress on every sensation within me. Was it fear? No! I cannot explain the inexplicable, but there was no nervousness to interfere with any emergency that might arise. The tiger came sneaking through the undergrowth,

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looking back at his pursuers, and, catching sight of us, lay low for a moment, then starting up, suddenly turned round and faced the music rather than the guns, for these animals cannot bear being driven, and if they can break through a driving force they will do so. Two or three ineffective shots, one from me, followed him, and the beaters swarming up the trees in fear, the only tiger I met face to face in the jungle escaped unharmed.

In connection with this episode, I am going to tell what some might call a tall tale, but though the proverb generally tells another one in saying that truth is stranger than fiction, it seems to be certainly so in the undoubtedly true story which I am about to relate. It is of a tiger battue similar to that which I have just described, and in the same neighbourhood, though I was not present. The accountant of the railway contractors' staff on the next district to mine was one of the party, and he had climbed a tree with a view of getting a better shot. The tiger, driven by the tom-toms, happened to pass directly under the tree. Either missing his footing under the excitement of the moment, or owing to his rifle catching in a branch, the unfortunate accountant fell down right on the top of the frightened beast, who mauled him so terribly before the others could come to the rescue that he died shortly after.

The only other tiger catastrophe that happened to anyone with whom I was in any way associated during my six and a half years in India, was that when a friend, a lieutenant in the Royal Artillery, and a son of a well-known bishop who is still living, was badly mauled when shooting near Bellary, where I was subsequently stationed. He fortunately, however, recovered. But a cheetah killed a much closer friend of mine, a district judge of the same place. This I only heard of after I left India, so do not know details.

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It is extraordinary what rude contrivances the native hunters or *shikarees* use, or did use in those days, in shooting such dangerous game as tigers. They had a gun nearly twice as long as those with which we are familiar, and only provided, like an ancient cannon, with a touch-hole instead of a lock. To fire it, the *shikaree* had to strike a light and hold it to the touch-hole, and the wonder is that such an active animal as the tiger ever failed to escape; nevertheless, with old and experienced *shikarees*, the animal generally got the worst of it.

At that time there was a reward by the Government of three hundred rupees for each tiger slain, hence the trade. There was also a smaller reward for the heads of venomous snakes, until it was found that certain ingenious natives caught them and bred them for slaughter, so as to earn an easy livelihood, though, of course, it was not without its risks. This scheme could not, obviously, be carried out as regards tigers, and I see by the last returns that about 2150 tigers and other dangerous beasts are killed annually in India, and about ten times as many snakes.

Tigers were not to be found in the cotton plains, they had to be sought at some distance, but cheetahs used to lurk in the rocky hills which, at intervals, spring out of the black soil plains. These were generally shot on nights so dark that a small piece of white paper had to be fixed to the sight of the gun, and generally all that could be seen of the beast was his pair of gleaming cat-like eyes, when, attracted by the bait—a tied-up goat—he approached his doom.

In connection with these tiger episodes, I remember a curious verdict of a native coroner's jury to this effect:—"That Pandoo died of tiger eating him. There was no other cause of death." This reminds me, though



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it is rather a hackneyed subject, to add to it some of the experiences of my neighbours and myself, in examples of native English which so often sacrifice sense and meaning to the length and pomposity of the phraseology. Three men came to me once bearing a letter from a native inspector beginning in these terms : "Sir,—Herewith I have the honour to enclose three bricklayers," etc. etc. Here is another specimen : "Honoured Sir,—Having been amputated from my family for some years, and as I have complaints of the abdomen coupled with great conflagrations of the internals, and prostration of all desire for work, with also the disgorging of my dinner, I hope your highness will excuse my attendance for ten or nine more days, and in duty bound shall ever pray for the salubrity of your temper, and the enlargement of your family."

Another: "Respectable Sir,—My wife runs off yesterday with Chinnasawmy Naidoo; My God, how annoying! Therefore, respectable Sir, will please apologize to me for not resorting to office this morning, for I go to apprehend this detestable individual."

Slang and formal official phraseology are somewhat mixed in the following, which was received from a native inspector :—

"Sir,—I have the honour to inform you that Moothasawmy and Soobaron hooked it on Friday last, and I have replaced them by two good masons.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"MOOTHOOVERA CHETTY."

No doubt the inspector, having heard some Englishman use the slang words in the letter, which are now out of date, I believe, thought that they were as good

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English as those of the rest of it. On the whole, however, the native official in Southern India has a remarkably good grasp of English, and his caligraphy is excellent.

The natives generally, though weak in muscle, are often capable of great endurance. One of them, for instance, will carry on his head the traveller's bedding, rolled up in a bundle, for twenty or thirty miles, which is an ordinary requirement in making a riding tour, and will arrive not much behind the rider. Physical and moral strength to resist a shock is, however, generally absent. A *tannicatch* or low-class servant of mine, in a fever, which a European would throw off in a day, dreamt that he saw the devil, and he simply died from fright; and it is notorious that if a native receives but a slight flesh wound from a tiger or other beast, he scarcely ever recovers. Of course, there are many exceptions, especially among the *shikarees*, the soldiers, and many belonging to northern races who have shown conspicuous instances of great physical bravery, equalling that of any white race in the world.

As an instance of this I may allude to a circumstance which occurred in London many years later, when I was editor of that old-established publication, *Colburn's United Service Magazine*. In it was published in serial form the life of Sir Frederick Roberts, now Earl Roberts, by Mr. C. R. Low, afterwards printed in book form (W. H. Allen and Co., 1883). Calling, with the author, on Sir Frederick in connection with the work, the General related to us the incident which appears in the book as follows :—

“At the time, General Roberts's attention was attracted by an act of devotion towards himself which should find a place in this personal record. When turning up Picnic Hill from the Afghan position, after vainly attempting

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to rally the discomfited Punjaubees, on turning to look back he beheld his Sikh orderly, Dhyan Singh by name, of the 5th Punjaub Infantry, walking close behind him with his arms stretched out to cover the body of his master, exposed to the Afghan fire across the narrow valley, which, as before said, was only fifty yards in width. Officers who have served on the north-west frontier can recall many instances of like devotion on the part of those serving under them, whether Sikhs or Pathans, and it is a disgraceful calumny to say that the virtue of gratitude is unknown to the inhabitants of the Indian peninsula."

For my own part, fully considering all his surroundings, I have a great admiration for the Indian native of every class, though of course there are exceptions. Simple, kindly, faithful, patient and cheerful even in adversity, he excels in many qualities which are denied to other races, while he has a keen sense of the justice which under British rule he invariably receives.

The total eclipse of the sun of 1868 occurred when, at my head-quarters, I was within riding distance of totality. Only astronomers and those few others who have had the opportunity of seeing the sun totally eclipsed appreciate the great difference in scenic effects between a total and a partial or annular eclipse. The latter, even when a very small fraction of the sun is visible, shows only a short interval of dusk or twilight, whereas when totally hidden, the blackness of night supervenes for several minutes. When this darkness interrupts the blaze of tropical sunlight, as in the case I speak of, the difference is still more remarkable. Though total eclipses of the sun are not very infrequent, the observation of them is so hedged round with physical difficulties that it is most unusual to meet with any person outside astronomical circles who has had the good fortune

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to have it within his experiences ; and the astronomer, engaged as he is on perhaps the one opportunity of his life, observing the scientific phenomena, is not the one to note any impression not directly connected with them. The rarity of observation is easily explained. In the first place, when the cone formed by the moon's shadow and projected into space strikes the earth, which event constitutes an eclipse, the shadow in its progress, owing to the disparity between the size of the sun and the moon, only covers a mere strip of the earth's surface, never more than about one hundred and seventy miles in breadth, and frequently much less ; and, secondly, this strip may be confined to the lonely ocean, or possibly to practically inaccessible regions of the land. For instance, no such phenomenon has been witnessed in London since 1715. More than all, the observer may, after much voyaging and labour, reach the favourable position only to find the whole spectacle marred by cloud or fog.

I spoke of the great cotton plains being varied by isolated hills. To one of these, near the village of Adoni, the party which we made up for the purpose wended our way, and ascended on the morning of the 18th August. The weather was simply perfect. Except for some cumulus clouds near the horizon the sky was brilliantly clear, unlike that cloudy, rainy-season sky which, in other parts of India, baulked many of the scientific parties that had come all the way from Europe and America to make observations.

The beginning of the eclipse occurred about eight o'clock, and it lasted about two and a half hours ; therefore totality took place between 9 and 10 a.m., when, at that season in India, if cloudless, the sun's glare is intense. Though the progress of occultation was obvious enough through the smoked glass which was the

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only apparatus we had, there was no very marked diminution of light until the near approach of totality, and though, from the rate of motion of the moon and earth being uniform, the fading and regaining of the sun's light must have been at the same speed, the actual impression made on the senses was very different.

Even in tropical latitudes we are accustomed to an interval of some duration between full daylight and the darkness of night, and the eye is trained to the gradual change ; but in a total solar eclipse this is only a matter of a few minutes—hence, no doubt, the reality is greatly magnified to the imagination. The almost immediate change from daylight to midnight blackness—a natural phenomenon otherwise unknown—was literally appalling. Some minutes before total obscuration the twilight set in, the whole landscape turning to an ashy grey, the face of Nature becoming of a deathlike pallor, and the bold gleaming sunlit curves of the cumulus clouds changing in a moment to a dark and angry purple, portentous of storm. It was the veritable *Götterdämmerung* in its literal sense, the twilight of the Gods. Then, like a great funeral pall advancing majestically towards us from the horizon, and staining the surface of the fair earth, came the black shadow of the moon, followed by what appeared to our unaccustomed eyes thick darkness. To an observer down on the plain below this huge shadow's edge, travelling at the rate of about 100 miles an hour, would appear to rush past instantaneously, but seen from our lofty position, commanding a surface of forty or fifty miles, the advance of the great shadow was comparatively slow and stately.

This was immeasurably grand, and almost incapacitated us from calmly observing, in the minute or two left to us, the silvery corona, and the crimson protuberances shooting out from the sun behind the black disc

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of the moon, while the whole sky glittered, as at midnight, with countless stars. Then, a moment after, standing on the summit of the precipitous hill, we could realize the words of Keats, which might have been specially written for the time and place :

“ . . . Suddenly a splendour like the morn,  
Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,  
All the sad spaces of oblivion,  
And every gulf and every chasm old,  
And every height and every sullen depth.

. . . . .

Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,  
Now saw the light, and made it terrible.”

Quaint old Fuller—why, by the way, do we so often thus call him, for his quaintness is no greater than that of any of his seventeenth-century contemporaries, and he died at middle age?—says, “Should our eyes be instantly posted out of midnight into noonday, certainly we should be blinded with the suddenness and excellencie of the lustre thereof. Nature, therefore, hath wiselie provided the twilight, as by a bridge by degrees to pass us from darkness to light.” The bridge in our case was so very short that we felt nearly in the condition imagined by the chronicler.

To show how different human beings may be impressed by the same sight, it may be mentioned that one member of our expedition remaining below, not being strong enough for the exertion of the ascent of the hill, told us afterwards that a peasant, who was steadily ploughing near him when the eclipse occurred, never stopped his work, not apparently noticing that anything unusual was going on. Others, however, were not so unobservant, as after descending from our station and riding slowly home along the plain, we saw the blue

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smoke ascending from hundreds of fields, the remains of the propitiatory sacrifices offered up by the natives to save the crops from the celestial wrath portended by the darkened sun.

However, even in the uttermost parts of the earth one does not run up against tigers and total eclipses every day, and our jungle life was monotonous enough, broken only by such an occasional meeting of the staff as has been spoken of at the Scotsman's bungalow, and by visits from chance travellers, generally of the military or civilian classes, who preferred our hospitality to the colder welcome of the *dāk* bungalow.

Once at an assembly of the former kind a Polish prince, who was on a big-game shooting expedition, arrived. His Highness spoke English well, but pronounced it very badly, and when at tiffin he said he had been washing himself all night, we wondered, because for a prince he did not look so particularly clean ; in fact, he seemed rather otherwise. However, we came to understand later that what he meant was that he had been *watching* all night up in a tree, to circumvent some dread beast of the field.

This reminds me of a more lamentable misunderstanding involving also a strange coincidence, which I came across years later in Australia. In this case, the mispronunciation was due to the Australian variety of the English language, which again recalls a Swiss hotel notice that I heard of lately, "English spoken, American and Australian understood." A doctor, making his long rounds in the Queensland bush, used occasionally to take his wife with him. Visiting at the house of a deceased farmer, who had treated his wife like a household slave, giving her no recreation, and both the death and the ill-treatment being forgotten by the doctor's wife, the widow said to her, "Oh, Mrs. Brown, I have

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had a sad loss since you were here last." To this the latter replied, thinking she said "saddle horse": "Indeed, how glad you must be, you can now get about and enjoy yourself." There is many a true word said in mistake.

Another occasional diversion was antelope shooting. The Indian antelopes are very wary, and they "wind" their pursuers at incredible distances, but it is possible to get fairly near them when approaching from the leeward. However, the usual method in the Deccan is to approach on horseback armed with a short carbine, or even a revolver, from a little off the windward direction, sufficiently so to escape the quarry's notice until pretty close up. Alarmed, the herd head for the wind, as they invariably do, and by riding rapidly across their approaching course they may be almost intercepted, as nothing will change their course. The great difficulty is, of course, to hit when both rider and antelope are at full speed, no matter how close together they may be. It is a most exciting encounter, and I have seen whole herds escape, owing to the aiming difficulty.

About this time, either on business or holiday, I forget which, a visit was made to the Malabar coast, the glorious tropical vegetation of which is one of the sights of India. The cocoa-nut, bread-fruit, palmyra and areca-nut trees, and countless others with their rich undergrowth and hanging draperies, "the boundless contiguity of shade," the green magnificence, that peculiar tone of dim mystery beyond the brown pillared trunks, entwined with knotted cords of parasites, and starred with countless blooms, so dense that the way through seemed almost impenetrable—all was surpassingly lovely. In these regions there is, during the monsoon, a steady and almost continuous drizzle, with a moist heat which, while giving a hothouse growth to all vegetation, enervates all human energy.



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To the latter effect was probably due the following incident. A well-known author visiting India at that time, passed through this beautiful district by rail. He was my fellow-traveller during the whole of the daylight time—a few hours only—of this part of the tour. A stout man, exhausted, no doubt, by receptions and meetings, he lay on the carriage seat opposite me, emitting mighty snores, but nevertheless the splendidly graphic description of these very woodland scenes that he was unconsciously passing through was not absent from the resulting book, which he wrote on returning to England. Like the hare, he had one eye open, or, as he does not actually say he saw for himself, he made an undoubtedly vivid and accurate second-hand tale of what he might have seen. The result of a picturesque imagination is certainly better than that of dunderhead experience.

Of all the most uncomfortable, nasty, never-to-be-forgotten, brutal calamities of the lesser sort, the collapse of a tent in storm and rain, while you are in it, is the worst. This I did not escape when engaged on some work away from head-quarters. The Indian tents are substantial, roomy affairs in comparison with the colonial kind. They are square, with double walls and roof for protection against the sun, the space between the walls being used for bath, stores, etc., while the floor is carpeted or matted, and the furniture fairly complete. To provide against "devils" and other winds, the guy ropes are not tied to pegs, which, when the ground is softened by rain, would soon give way, but great holes are dug in which are buried many-branched boughs of trees, and to these the ropes are secured. The friction being great, the ropes would break before the boughs would move. During a demoniacal dance of the elements in a monsoon burst, the tent, drenched with rain,

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fell on me in the middle of the night, and soaked with wet and nearly all my temporary belongings utterly ruined, and papers and books saturated, I had to be dragged out from the *débris*. With all the subsequent difficulties attendant on trying to get through the deep cotton soil to far-away shelter, I realized that, though a house falling down was much more dangerous, the tent catastrophe was far more calculated to give rise to what might be called an unparliamentary condition of mind and speech. It would have taken a Commissioner of Oaths to do justice to the subject.

## CHAPTER VII

Change of quarters—Cholera—Stories—A famous court-martial—A Hindu's joke on his wives—War telegrams—The Neilgherries—The Todas—New duties—Dacoits—A narrow escape—A fearful accident—Lord Mayo's assassination—Madras—A State ball—A legal complication—The Taj Mahal—Government Philistinism—The Marble Rocks—Delhi—Lucknow—Cawnpore—Characteristics of natives and of the East—Bible similitudes—Anecdotes.

**F**ATE, in the shape of orders from head-quarters, now changed my fortunes to a new sphere of labour, as the parsons term it—that is to say, to the town of Bellary, then a large civil and military station. Here I was to be in charge of the construction of a branch line to that town, including a large terminal station and one of the great river bridges so characteristic of India, a first experience of this kind. It was a change socially, with many advantages, for I was to be amongst European society, in its Anglo-Indian sense, and especially that including the tenderer sex, for in the jungle ladies' visits were of the angelic description, in a double sense. But I had to set up a buggy and put not only my outdoor servants, but my manners into livery, so to say, giving up my previous free and unconventional life, "exempt from public haunt."

The Bellary period was perhaps one of the pleasantest in my varied career, with youth, good health and spirits, agreeable society, congenial work, and, comparatively speaking, money in plenty; and if it were not for the unbridled ferocity of the climate for eight months of

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the year, all things were smooth. But this drawback was great, and there never was a truer saying than that of Montaigne, "The gods sell their good gifts to men."

Cholera was raging furiously in the station at that time, and the poor young Tommy Atkinses were carried out to the cemetery, a little beyond my bungalow, one after the other in grim procession to the solemn strains of the *Dead March*. But this phase soon passed, and being an honorary member of more than one of the military messes, giving and receiving dinners, playing rackets, which was the game of the day, and going to garrison races, existence went easily enough. Talking of the latter, an amusing episode was a race ridden by the two fattest men of the station, a corpulent major and a portly judge, neither of whom would have felt out of his surroundings at a cattle show. They were arrayed in correct jockey costume, and the finish, which was exciting, was made at a walk, the animals being unable under their loads to go faster after being round even the short course.

The stout major was the principal character in the following incident. He was at a large dinner party, and whether owing to the heat, the food, or the champagne, he fell asleep after the ladies rose, and the men, seeing him so comfortable, left him, and he was soon forgotten in the crowd. On the native servants coming later to clear the table they ventured gently to rouse him, but springing his folded arms violently back, with some vivid language, the major sent them sprawling to the floor. A second attempt leading to the same result, they left him, and he slept on peacefully after the other guests had gone and the household had retired to rest. Awaking later, and thinking he was in his own bachelor quarters, he groped his way through the door and



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called out for his servant, roaring, "Boy! Boy!" at the top of his voice. This brought the disturbed hostess out on to the landing, *en déshabillé*, and the major, completely flabbergasted at what seemed to him an unexpected and untimely visit, cried, "Good gracious, Mrs. Dumbledyke, what brings you here at this time of night?" Then he began to realize a situation the relation of which became the mess story of the season.

Here is another ludicrous event, this time happening to myself. I was dining with a friend and his wife, in those funereal habiliments which modern custom has decreed must accompany evening festivities. Artificial light covers many sins, and an old dress suit is often worn, without attracting attention to its shininess, until absolute rending of the garment takes place. My suit was of this kind, and sitting rather suddenly down in a low chair in the verandah of my host—well, I shall not proceed with further details, which perhaps the least intelligent of my readers can fill in for himself. It is enough to say that the ordinary requirement, if possible, of polite society, not to turn one's back to a lady, had to be very carefully attended to during the whole of the rest of the evening, the efforts to do so being fortunately minimized by the fact of my being the only guest. I could not help thinking, however, that the manœuvres to attain my object must have been obvious, and that the hostess had a good laugh afterwards.

One of the most curious coincidences of the many I have heard occurred here. There was stationed in the garrison a certain Colonel Lilley, who had several daughters, of all ages, famed for their rather expensive and conspicuous dress. They sailed into church one Sunday morning rather late, when the second lesson was being read, and just at the pronouncement of the

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appropriate sentence, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these."

Needless to say, though it was in another part of India that the great Mutiny occurred a few years before, I met several who had gone through that strenuous time in the north. Among others, a lady who, cut off from her friends, had ridden several miles through country swarming with hostile natives, and whose experiences, had they been written, would have made one of the most exciting tales possible to conceive. Her dauntless courage would have shamed many a man in similar plight.

"Mediisque in milibus ardet,

Bellatrix, audetque viris concurrere virgo."

And yet this plucky woman would faint at the sight of a cat.

Talking of the Mutiny, there was a good deal of precaution in my time, in the way of shutting the door after the abstraction of the horse, or rather perhaps, I should say, to avoid a second depredation. Some of the principal railway stations I built as fortifications, with loopholes for rifles, tanks in roof for water supply, etc., so as to enable Europeans, who might have to take refuge there, to stand a siege. Also, when I subsequently visited Delhi, I found that when the European troops attended church they took into their pews with them their loaded rifles and fixed bayonets—a curious accompaniment to prayer.

A notable court-martial took place about this time in Bellary, so notable that it was the subject of leading articles in the *Times*. A martinet colonel, it was



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alleged, was very tyrannical to his men; in fact, it was said that, noticing one of them yawning on parade, he ordered the man to be put to bed with a guard over him, in order to have, as he said, his sleep out—a kind of treatment probably more exasperating than being put in irons. A young lieutenant was especially the object of these attentions, and in a sudden fit of irrepressible resentment at some capricious order on parade, threw down his sword and refused to obey. Trial by court-martial and dismissal from the service followed; but public sympathy with the delinquent was so general, for he was a great favourite, that the home authorities subsequently, I believe, reinstated him, but transferred him to another regiment.

Bellary was a very peculiarly situated town. In the midst of an extensive plain rose a smooth rock four or five hundred feet high, something the shape of half an elongated egg, some miles round, and completely bare except for an ancient fortress on the summit, in which was confined, all the time I was there and for many years before, a notable rajah who had committed some gross offence. At the foot of the rock, nearly all round, clustered the various barracks, bungalows of officers, civilians and others, public offices, shops, etc. One of the shops was kept by a Eurasian named Abraham, and was situated in one of the clefts of the great rock, so the establishment was invariably alluded to as "Abraham's bosom."

Once a party of officers and others, including myself, went to an entertainment in the native quarter given by a wealthy Hindu. He had a good supper with excellent wines, including champagne, or "Simpkin," as it used to be called in India—I suppose derived from the native pronunciation of the word. But, of course, caste prevented the host joining us in the disposal of this

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good fare. One of the things provided to amuse us was a galvanic machine which he had imported from England as a great novelty. Being wealthy, he had a great number of wives, and, though strictly speaking against custom, he brought them into view in the room for the purpose of illustrating his new hobby. There they were making a long row, covered with jewellery, and, joining their hands together, he sent several shocks through the lot, to their intense alarm and perplexity at first, and subsequent great amusement, when they got more used to it.

The Franco-German war of 1870 was going on at this time, and the general commanding the Bellary district used to receive daily telegrams as to the leading events. Copies of these he used to send round by a mounted orderly to the leading European residents, so those of us who had this privilege were quite up to date in this respect.

After my work in Bellary was finished I was transferred to the charge of a big length of the open railway, but before proceeding to my new position I had to recruit for a time in the hills, and went up for a delightful sojourn in the Neilgherries at the highest point, Ootacamund. Existence there, in a physical sense, was glorious, equalled by none of those numerous climates in which, before or after, my lot was cast. Otherwise, the irksomeness of doing nothing but riding about, for I had taken up one of my horses, and playing billiards and rackets, rather palled.

One of the most interesting things in connection with the Neilgherry hills is the existence of tribes quite apart in origin, language, customs, and appearance from the ordinary natives of the plains, even with all their countless varieties in these matters, the Todas in particular, whose villages I visited. This is a very fine

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race, light in complexion, especially the women. They have fine figures and eyes and intelligent faces, and such a Jewish type of countenance that some people have thought them to be descendants of the lost tribes of Israel. This is supported by the fact that their religion has a monotheistic element, and they believe in the immortality of the soul. They have, however, no traditions. They carry no weapons, and have gentle manners and pursue pastoral occupations only, tending buffaloes. They are a very peculiar race in practising polyandry, the man being restricted by their laws to one partner, but she may have several. It is curious that in my wanderings I should come across subsequently the Mormons, who take the opposite view of matrimonial relationships. The Todas are a diminishing race, and when I was among them did not number more than six hundred families.

The scenery of the Neilgherries, or Blue Mountains, is magnificent, and the camellia, rhododendron, dog rose, jessamine, and strawberry grow wild. Notwithstanding the cold climate, tigers, bears, elephants, and other animals of the plains are to be found. There used to be a most comfortable club at Ooty, as it is generally called, at which I stayed, and where there was good company.

The work which was now to be mine was of the least interesting character to be found in the whole of civil engineering operations. It was simply being at the head of a large staff of inspectors and others keeping in repair the numerous works included on a hundred or more miles of railway finished and in working, my headquarters being again in the jungle, and even more lonely than before, as now passing travellers went through by train, not needing hospitality. Moreover, I had to give up my dear old horses—of which I had kept

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previously three or four—as my inspections were now to be carried out by train and by trolley instead of in the saddle. The latter vehicle is a light four-wheel one, with an awning for protection from the sun, placed on the rails, and pushed by two coolies, one running on each rail, which their bare clinging feet makes easy. Two other coolies sit up or run alongside to relieve their mates when tired. The trolley is easily and quickly lifted off the rails and put on one side when a train is heard or seen approaching. The rail in India is a favourite resting-place for snakes, the iron becoming fiery hot in the sun, so that the cold-blooded creatures seek it for warmth, while the slowness of the trains and the vibration they cause enable the reptiles to escape with dignified ease. Notwithstanding the enormous number of natives killed by snakes in India—over twenty thousand annually—I never came across a case, though scorpion stings were very common. The severity of these vary very much according to the susceptibility of the person attacked, some being nearly fatal, while in other cases recovery was only a matter of a day or two.

The slowness of the trains just referred to may be realized by the fact that I remember a case of *dacoits* (robbers) jumping on to the goods trucks of trains travelling at night, lifting the tarpaulins, and throwing the lighter goods overboard, then jumping off and carrying away their plunder.

The principal diversion from the monotony of life and work was the fighting with other departments of the railway. In the construction of the line there is only one's own branch and chief to deal with. On maintenance work, the engineering, locomotive, and traffic branches are in continual contact and frequent conflict. The rule is that we—that is, our own branch

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—are always right. An engine goes off the rail. Angry correspondence ensues as to whether the rail, whose maintenance in proper position is the business of the engineering department, caused the derailment, or some defect in the engine itself, which is in charge of the locomotive branch, and as the catastrophe itself destroys nearly all evidence, there is generally no satisfactory verdict.

A narrow escape from physical annihilation also varied the monotony. The chief engineer, in inspecting the several divisions, used to run over the line at a tremendous speed—sixty or seventy miles an hour—in his special train, this being done to test the smoothness of the line. There was only—as is the rule in India—one line of rails, trains passing each other at stations, where there are two lines at least. At the top of a steep gradient was a station where some empty trucks were lying on a siding, but, through some negligence, badly braked. A high wind rose at night and set them in motion on to the main line, where, without the knowledge of the station staff, and favoured by the down incline and the wind, they were soon going at a fearful speed. Our special inspection train was temporarily shunted into a siding at the station below the incline, and ready to start up it. When we were just ready to go on to the line down which the runaway was approaching, we heard the sound of it, and it dashed through clear of us at a terrible speed. If we had left a minute or two sooner we should have been in small pieces in a moment from the effects of what the Americans call, graphically, a butting collision, and there would have been a good spurt of promotion, for we had several bigwigs on board.

This was a most uncomfortable as well as a lonely life. Where work was too far to be reached by trolley

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the train had to be used, and as there were only one or two of these daily each way, a start often had to be made after midnight, and after perhaps doing the business of half an hour, there might be half a day or more to wait for a return train. Frequently a night had to be spent away from head-quarters, and there being no hotel, a station waiting-room had to be used with one's mosquito-curtained bed set up at night on the platform for coolness. This is often a necessity for railway and occasionally other officials, so that travellers by rail in India are not surprised, as they would be, no doubt, elsewhere, to see the platforms at night occasionally so occupied.

A constant source of anxiety was the possible washing away of bridges by floods in monsoon time. When news comes of this, possibly at night, the maintenance engineer has to start off, probably in tropical torrents of rain, to the scene of disaster, to take measures for the rapid restoration of railway communication ; and in such weather he goes to bed with the imminence of disturbance hanging over him as badly as that of a doctor or a watch-dog. Such happenings were not infrequent in my case, but nothing on so large a scale as that which occurred in the next division, where, during this time, a large bridge spanning a river twice as wide as the Thames was washed away in the night. Gangs of watchmen patrol the lines to give warning, but, in this case, they went to shelter themselves from the storm, and no signal being given, the night mail train from Madras to Bombay, with its hundreds of passengers, leapt into the roaring torrent without one left to tell the tale.

It was when out on one of these inspection journeys that an inspector met me with the news of the assassination of the Viceroy, Lord Mayo. This startled and

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grieved all people in India down to the class—a very numerous one there—which, like the ploughman already alluded to when the eclipse was described, do not think of anything beyond the work which they have immediately in hand.

Three months in Madras, relieving temporarily a high official there, was a pleasant change in duties and in social surroundings. As to the latter, the luxuries of the Madras club, said to be the best in India, and a State ball given by the Governor, Lord Napier of Merchistoun, remain chiefly in my memory. At the latter, the aged Prince of Arcot was the chief guest; his dress, more especially his turban, was a blaze of diamonds and other jewels, and when to the tune of "The Roast Beef of Old England," Lord Napier, in his plain official uniform, took him on his arm to supper, according to etiquette, instead of a lady, the contrast was sufficiently startling.

I think it was then that occurred one of the most curious legal complications that I have come across in my wanderings. It must be remembered that in India, the Courts administer English, Hindoo, or Mohammedan law according to the religion of the litigants, in matters where religion or custom is in question. An English barrister married to an English wife, having proclivities similar to those of Henry VIII, was anxious to supplant a Katherine of Aragon by an Anne Boleyn, who was a fascinating European barmaid. But, like his prototype, he wanted to do all, however questionable it might be, strictly according to law. As no grounds for annulment or divorce existed, the barrister conceived the idea of embracing the Mohammedan religion and inducing his Boleyn to do likewise. Then marrying her, polygamy being legal for Mussulmans, he had a Tudor-like satisfaction that all was square. But as

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Napoleon at Waterloo forgot Blücher, so the barrister forgot the rights of Katherine, who at once sought the aid of the law to secure her position. She, being Christian, could not legally be obliged to share wifehood with another, while at the same time the conversion of the husband to another religion, notwithstanding its motives and its legal consequences in marital latitude, were just as legally incontestable. I forget what was the result, and thus can leave my readers to speculate over it.

My next leave was spent in an extensive trip to Bombay, Calcutta, and the north-west provinces, including Jubbulpore, Lucknow, Cawnpore, Allahabad, Agra, and Delhi. I cannot accustom myself to the new-fangled spelling of these places. To speak of these well-known tourist haunts and their glorious monuments would be outside the scope of this work, and, moreover, superfluous, after the descriptions of Sir Edwin Arnold, and of those brilliant globe-trotters—Sir F. Treves, Messrs. Sidney Low, Ian Malcolm, and others. I shall only say that, seeing subsequently almost every really great building in the world, the Taj Mahal at Agra stands in the memory, mystic, wonderful, as if clothed in white samite, the pearl without price, the peerless. Close on the other side of the Jumna rises the lovely tomb of Itmad-ood-Dowlah, the description of which is generally included in tourists' tales; but what has not been noted was a gross act of Philistinism on the part of the Government. During the Mutiny, not many years before my visit, the English soldiers, while occupying the building, picked out with their bayonets many of the precious stones with which the walls are inlaid. Instead of proper restoration, or of neglect, which was the only proper alternative, the Government actually filled the gaps with sealing-wax. Goliath, the greatest





THE MARBLE ROCKS, JUBBULPORE

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Philistine on record, would hardly have been equal to this.

The marble rocks of Jubbulpore are not always within the round trip at so much per head, hotels included, of the time-saving tourist. I have vividly before me the deep green waters of the head of the Nerbudda, and the forest-crowned, brilliant white marble cliffs rising from and reflected in them. Among the dripping waterfalls and open glades, with tangled brakes, where the dazzling sun never penetrates, one looks for dryads and water nymphs, instead of the slimy alligators of which I have never seen such numbers together as in this place. Especially large monkeys abound also here. There is, probably, nothing anywhere else quite like this wonderful scene.

Enlargement on the scenes of the Mutiny, the footsteps of which I traced, fresher than when followed by the more well-known writers I have mentioned, is open to the same objection of repetition of their stirring narratives. The bullet indentations on the stonework of the Cashmere Gate at Delhi, the place of Home and Salkeld's forlorn hope, the riddled copper ball of the church tower inside, and the narrow street in which the gallant John Nicholson fell, were all engrossing scenes. Later, I attempted to realize the frightful Cawnpore massacres on the bank of the sacred Ganges, where the women and children, wearied by suffering and looking forward to release, met their terrible fate.

An exhausting journey, although in the cold season, for day after day in the train, brought me back to the monotonous round of duty. For though I have met with some excitements, as recorded in the foregoing plain tales from the plains, they count for little in the long years passed through, especially those in the jungle; for I have neither time nor taste for shooting, its only diversion.

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Macbeth said, just before he met his fate, and apparently anticipating it :

“I ’gin to be a-weary of the sun.”

Shakespeare, of course, put the sun as a figure for life itself in this case, for, apart from the context which shows it, nobody is likely to be weary of the sun in Scotland. In the more limited and direct sense, I began to be weary of that powerful luminary. What the Germans call *Wander-lust*, the true *fons et origo* of the British Empire, was upon me, and also a longing desire to see my people at home again, this perhaps being the strongest incentive of all. These influences coinciding with a quarrel with head-quarters, I resigned my post and left India for good.

But my departure was not without kindly memories, especially of the often depreciated native, who, according to his lights, has many virtues and good qualities, intelligence, faithfulness, patience and kindly good humour, of all of which I have had many instances. Long residence in the East and its opportunities from my business of coming into contact with Orientals has, with me, as with many others, led to a more intelligent understanding of the Bible, many parts of which without these are more or less obscure. Later, in a colony which I shall not designate more closely, I heard of a canon of the church enlarging on a journey of Jacob's, when he pictured to his congregation that patriarch taking up his *carpet bag* on leaving home. Another preacher, referring to the Nativity, spoke of there being no room in the inn, thinking, as was evident from the tone of his other remarks, that the word room had not its only original meaning of space, but the entirely modern one of a definite apartment. One could see that he had in his mind a trim hotel bedroom,

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with an iron bedstead, dressing-table, etc. In these cases a former bishop was said to have been hard pressed for candidates for ordination, and to have taken them out of the highways and byways of society, with practically no examination ; for the ignorance, unusual with the Anglican clergy, of which the above are true samples, was rather more than that of mere Oriental customs ; but a residence in the East would have prevented even these. There is no doubt that the magnificently dramatic episodes of the Old Testament can be much better realized by one who has lived in lands similar to those in which they took place.

# AFRICA

## CHAPTER VIII

Journey home—Materialism—Missing friends—The smallest railway in the world—Stories—The Tichborne case—The Queen and the Shah of Persia—Engineers abroad—South Africa—Teneriffe—A brilliant Jew—The Rev. Mr. Bellew—Smoking-cabin stories—Meeting Cecil Rhodes—The Punch and Judy Show—A starving crew—The Professor's romance—Table Bay.

THE journey home through Italy and France was without incident, and was over well-trodden lands, so that, generally speaking, nothing need be said about it. But two things may be noticed, one illustrative of a change in public manners. At the San Carlo Theatre in Naples the well-dressed audience frequently hissed violently any singer who failed to execute a note or roulade with the perfection they thought it required. Thirty years later, at this and other Italian opera-houses, I had the opportunity of noting that this custom, so disconcerting to the performer and annoying to the audience, had entirely disappeared. The great sight in Paris was the ruins of the Tuileries and the Hôtel de Ville, after the fantastic tricks before high heaven of *Messieurs les gens du pavé* of 1870.

In the old days, when abroad meant abroad, and not, as it does now, just round the corner, so to say, with frequent fast steam services to get there, fashions in remote places were antique, and the returning wanderer looked like a figure in an old engraving, necessitating

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an early and costly visit to the tailor. But there were other changes to be noticed, though covering a longer period than that of my absence, say, between the fifties and the seventies. The later epoch was pre-eminently the age of materialism. The Prussian supremacy of blood and iron, the tendencies arising from the teachings of Haeckel, Huxley, and Tyndall, and the earlier aspects of Darwinism led chiefly to this phase. The Mysterious was out of fashion.

“This age that blots out life with question marks,  
This nineteenth century with its knife and glass,  
That make thought physical, and thrust far off  
The Heaven, so neighbourly with men of old,  
To voids sparse sown with alienated stars.”

With the mysterious went largely the imagination and its companion humour. There were no successors to Hood, Dickens, Barham, and the earlier Lever. Dr. Whewell, whose manifold attainments included that of ingenious twisting of words, was asked once to find rhymes to certain Old Testament names, the result being—

“The great and good Sennacherib  
Of many a foe, could crack a rib,  
But failed with old Jehosophat,  
For why? because he was so fat.”

The Huxleyite of the seventies would severely object that Sennacherib was not good, nor was there any evidence of his physical strength, that he did not live in the time of Jehoshaphat, and that there was nothing whatever to show that the latter was stout. Yet a man recently told me that he always read serious books as a change, because life was so comic; but then, he was a Member of Parliament.

The home-staying citizen is less aware of these changes. They are too gradual. The Londoner sees

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so many friends come and go that few are missed. Coming from a long sojourn abroad, and meeting an old acquaintance, you are, figuratively, ready to fall on his neck with joy, when you are greeted with, "Hallo ! Haven't seen you for some time ; good-bye," and he is off. It strikes one like a cold shower bath. But many old friends were gone. It was as if a shell had burst in the middle of the old *coterie*, hitting most of those around.

Anxious to get again into harness, I was not for long a strap-hanger, and accepted an engagement in North Wales, on what was then the smallest railway in the world, the Festiniog line, the rails of which are only two feet apart. This wonderful railway, then the only one of this character, though it has been much imitated since, especially in France, could turn round extraordinarily sharp curves, owing to the facility which was given to it by its narrowness. Hence, even in the hilly country which it traversed, it is able to keep its rails fairly close to the ground surface and avoid many of the heavy cuttings and tunnels which would have been necessary for a wider and therefore straighter line. The original Festiniog line, on the extension of which I was employed, was built with its tunnels and bridges only just large enough for the tiny engines and trains to go through, so that travelling on the footplate of the engine, as I often did, I was obliged to duck my head at each bridge and tunnel, otherwise that important part of me would certainly have been left behind. The extension, and probably since the original line, was built according to the Government regulations, which provide ample width in all structures of the kind so as to avoid accident. The chief thing I remember about this visit to North Wales is the reading in one of the churches of a clergyman who stammered frightfully. I hope and



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suppose that such a thing would not now be possible. Impatience and a sense of irreverence could hardly but follow the invocation—

“O Lord, op-op-op-open Thou our li-li-li-lips.”

Other work followed that in North Wales, and I was in the old life again, occasionally at Parliament where many of the old figures were prominent. Palmerston was gone, and Robert Lowe more to the front, with his white hair and red eyes—an albino. A fine classical scholar, he was, as Home Secretary and Chancellor of the Exchequer, credited with crushing, in a few biting phrases, deputations which he did not like. A sort of anticipatory tombstone inscription was written of him about this period. It ran—

“Here lie the bones of Robert Lowe.  
Where his soul’s gone to, we do not know.  
If to the realms of Peace and Love,  
Farewell to happiness above.  
If, haply to a lower level,  
We can’t congratulate the Devil.”

The second Tichborne trial was before the Courts about this time, and created more excitement, it was said, than any other since that of Queen Caroline. The carriage of the claimant, followed by sympathetic crowds, passed our office daily on his way to the old Westminster Courts. There was not nearly so much romance about this trial as that in the Yelverton case already spoken of.

The visit of the Shah of Persia was also an event, as he appeared in public processions, etc., clothed with all the glory of Solomon, his diamond-covered head-gear being especially conspicuous. It is said that the late Queen said to him: “I believe that your Majesty’s ancestors worshipped the sun”; to which he replied, “And so would your Majesty’s, if they ever saw it.”

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The engineering work which I now undertook was spasmodic and badly paid. It is a curious fact that, in the civil engineering profession, if a young man once goes abroad for any considerable time he is forgotten, and loses his status at home. He is generally dependent on higher members of the profession for employment. These are fully provided with assistants, who, having been able to tide over depressions, have remained with him or others. The wanderer, therefore, must either stay abroad or, if he comes home, must seek in London each time another post beyond these isles. Such a one, therefore, rarely reaches eminence at the head-quarters of the profession, which London undoubtedly is. This is perhaps natural and of course there are high positions abroad, though neither in rank nor emolument vying with those at home. But employers and the public to some extent suffer, as there is no comparison between the experience gained by an engineer who has had to deal with the much larger works, and with the victories over their difficulties in the colonies, in India, and other far-off regions, and that acquired in the construction of the comparatively insignificant undertakings at home.

But to the travelling engineer himself there are compensations. He acquires a mind charged with broad cosmopolitan ideas; he gets some conception of the fact that there are some creatures in God's earth who, if not moulded in the type of John Bull, have some excellences which he does not possess; and he obtains a sort of stereoscopic view of life, seeing to some extent around it its lights and its shades and its realities, from a more comprehensive standpoint than that of the home dweller.

It was not surprising, therefore, after what has been said, that I found myself again on the sea, having

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accepted an appointment under the Government of the Cape of Good Hope on the construction of the narrow-gauge railways there. This was long before South Africa became prominent in imperial politics, before the Zulu war and the first Boer war, and, of course, many years before the last one. Diamonds had only recently been discovered, and as to gold, Johannesburg was unknown, its site being the wild veldt, traversed only by the pioneer Boer or the springbok.

The month's voyage of those days was more tedious than that to the East, for it was without break, except, if it might be so called, a far-off sight of Teneriffe. This peak, covered with snow, was quite visible at one hundred miles' distance, though its base was enveloped in haze, the pure white cone shining brilliantly in the soft southern air, and, except for its form, like a pearl hung in the grey-blue distance. But for its unchanging shape for a whole day, it might have been thought to be a fleecy sunlit cloud—a sight to be remembered.

On board was a Jew of brilliant attainments and conversation, not quite the same type of that gifted race that has been so conspicuous in South Africa more recently, for his gifts were of a more intellectual than commercial order. Without any special religious leanings, he had an enthusiastic adoration for the Bible as literature, and, being kindred spirits in the latter respect, we found that we had both been occasionally attending the church in Bloomsbury where the celebrated divine Bellew used to preach. An extraordinarily handsome man, not old, but with snow-white hair, his reading of the Bible was one of the finest elocutionary displays that I have ever heard. It has always seemed to me that it is a pity that short episodes from the Old Testament are not more often dramatized in the words of the text. With competent actors, it could not be irreverent. The

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Bloomsbury church used to be packed to overflowing, with not even standing room. This clergyman, showing no tendencies whatever in his preaching or services towards Roman Catholicism, subsequently suddenly resigned his benefice and adopted that faith.

Some smoking-cabin tales might be introduced here.

A child who had had difficulties in school connected with the spelling of the word "psalm," being asked by the doctor what was the matter with its mother, who was suffering from spasms, replied, "It were them things as they sings in church, sir."

An absent-minded bishop who had been staying a few days with his brother's family, on leaving kissed the housemaid and gave five shillings to his niece.

Two Englishmen visiting the Devil's Glen in the county Wicklow met an Irish peasant on the road, and thought that they would chaff him. "I say, Pat," said one, "this is the Devil's own place, I suppose; now if you and I were to meet him, which of us two do you think he would take?" "Shure, your honour, he would take me, for sartin." "And why, now?" "Well," said the Irishman, "you see, it is this way, sir, he'd be sure of your honour at any time."

Enjoying such stories as these, and leading in many practical jokes on board, was a broad-shouldered youth with fair curly hair, who, though he had a year or two previously visited the Cape for his health, this being his second voyage, looked as hearty and was as high-spirited as any young fellow could wish to be. Little did any of our fellow-passengers, including probably himself, guess that his name was to be known a few years later all over the world as Cecil Rhodes, the Empire builder and educationist. He had already then made some money from the recently started diamond fields, but the enormous fortune from the same source, which probably had

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some damping effect on his careless, happy nature, had not come to him then. With him was a young friend with a different destiny. He was possessed of that unhappy but not infrequent combination, a beer income and a champagne taste, as the Americans say, so that, belonging to a crack cavalry regiment, and coming to the end of his resources, he had to sell his commission and seek his living as best he could. Informed by Rhodes that there was no such thing known at the Cape as a Punch and Judy show, he bought the necessary equipment from a retiring showman at home, and with it on board accompanied his friend to South Africa, where he was to exhibit his performance in Cape Town and up to the diamond fields. I never heard what subsequently became of him.

One of the excitements of the voyage was meeting, between Madeira and Teneriffe, a small brig showing signals of distress. Steaming up alongside, we found about half a dozen haggard and exhausted men on board—Spaniards—who had been without food for some days. Their voyage across the Atlantic had been lengthened by bad weather, and their provisions having run out, the poor creatures looked fearfully emaciated; and to see how they pounced on the loaves, etc. with which we supplied them was something not to be forgotten. They did not want anything but food, and they soon sailed away, no doubt thanking us in their own language, which no one on board of our vessel understood.

In such a voyage as this, to one of the colonies which shall be nameless, a curious development in the careers of two friends of mine took place. The London Agent-General of the colony was charged, simultaneously, with the selection of a Professor for its University and of a Matron to a large public institution. This being done, the Agent asked the Professor if on the

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voyage he would look after the lady, who was booked to go by the same steamer. Naturally connecting the office of Matron with age and experience, he readily agreed, thinking of it as a nominal duty. The Matron being separately told that a University Professor would take care of her, thought that in the keeping of a probably grave and spectacled dry-as-dust Professor she would be quite safe. However, meeting on board for the first time, the mutual discovery was made that, as is not uncommon with colonial appointments, the Professor was under thirty and the Matron much younger. The sequel, though not fiction, may be guessed by any experienced novel-reader. The pair took care of each other so well that in a short time after the voyage the Matron was transferred to another and smaller institution—the Professor's household.

The approach to Table Bay is very impressive. In the centre stands the celebrated Table Mountain, with the straight level top which gives it its name, and its frowning deeply scored precipices merging, lower down, in soft green slopes dotted with groves of the rich dark green Scotch firs, which are so numerous about the city. Gradually, as the eye follows downwards, white dwellings interspersed among the trees grow closer and closer, until the crowded city with its steeples and towers nestles below, along the busy wharves and the bright blue bay itself. The mountain is like some great battlemented fortress standing grimly over and protecting its people below. On the right of the main mountain, with a winding climbing road between them, is the Lion Hill with its double summit, on the bare green declivities of which gleam, in the brilliant sunshine, the more maritime suburbs. Beyond, on the left of the Table, and butting against it, rises the Devil's Peak, jagged and splintered as to its top, with



CAPE TOWN AND TABLE MOUNTAIN





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its slopes riven by deep gorges and tumbling streams, while at the base, buried in the most luxuriant foliage, mostly of rich, velvety, deep green firs, lie unseen, "deep in the shady shadows of a vale," most of the lovely outskirts of this charmingly surrounded city. Here are Newlands, Rosebank, Rondebosch, Wynberg, and Constantia, the latter being the place where the rich sweet wine of that name is grown.

From time to time, when certain winds blow, a soft cloud, white as snow, gathers over the beetling forehead of Table Mountain, and hangs down in graceful folds over its vertical face. This is appropriately called the Table-cloth, and is a forerunner of the dreaded south-easter, a wind which raises clouds of dust, and it is even said that good-sized pebbles fly about like grapeshot on these occasions.

## CHAPTER IX

First colonial impressions—A far-reaching mistake—Old South Africa—Auction gambling—Ostrich farming—A mouse-catching native boy—Government methods—Routine—A suicide—The Karoo—Wild beasts—One in the pantry—Human wild beasts—Kaffirs and Zulus—A native gathering—Cetewayo.

**L**ANDING at Capetown is a struggle. The coloured races have, as a rule, none of the northern competitive spirit, but it develops acutely when rivalry to carry the traveller's luggage occurs. Why do the heathen so furiously rage together when one lands at such ports as Colombo and Capetown? It is hard to say, but so it is, and astonishment is increased when one's various belongings are found complete in the hotel hall after the many vicissitudes of boat-landing and customs examination.

This was my first colonial experience, and one of the first things that struck me was the absence of what might be called the official dignity and reserve of home and of India. Here, the engineer-in-chief, though a cultivated high-class professional man, received me in his shirt-sleeves, the weather being hot. An Indian official in like case, though having the lightest of garments, would certainly have had them on.

The Cape railways were, as I have said, on a narrow gauge, though not so narrow as that of the Festiniog line of which I have already spoken. The rails were 3 ft. 6 in. apart, instead of 4 ft. 8½ in., which, with few exceptions, is the gauge adopted throughout Europe and North America. Indeed, in the United States,

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where several different gauges formerly existed, not only the insufficiency of the smaller ones, but the inconvenience of diversity, was found to be so great that many years ago millions of money were spent in converting the lines to the wider gauge. To the ordinary passenger the mere difference of one line from another in respect to the distance between the rails seems a small thing, and where such lines meet he only sees the very minor inconvenience of having to change from one carriage to another ; but with the carriage of goods it is a very important matter, affecting the cost of transport in a material degree. In the South African interior, as in many other countries outside Europe, raw materials of various kinds are, and will be for years, the chief produce to be taken to the ports. These are almost all light-weighted, such as cotton, wool, skins, grain, etc., and a small narrow wagon, such only as can run safely on such a narrow railway, cannot be piled up with the quantity of light stuff which, but for its own small width, it could easily carry. It would be top-heavy and capsize. Hence even a non-professional reader will understand that, in order to obtain economical transport, the lighter the nature of the load the broader should be the wagon. Moreover, everyone familiar with business—and who is not in these busy days?—knows that economy is best obtained by working every machine to its full power, inasmuch as there are usually a number of fixed expenses which must go on whether much or little business is done. This is eminently so in the railway business, and the excess in cost of hauling a big train over that of a small one is insignificant in comparison with the fixed charges of railway working as a whole.

Sir Charles Gregory, then consulting engineer in

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London to the Cape Government, was hostile to the narrow gauge on those and other grounds, but, like many other half-informed bodies who pay highly for advice and then do not take it, the local authorities knew better, and the mistake was made.

Unfortunately, this bad beginning has led to nearly the whole of the railways of Africa since following suit, so that the cost of the entire produce of the Continent for all time will be increased. The economy of the smaller line in first cost of construction, which practically only applies to the few mountainous parts passed through, is a mere trifle in comparison with the loss which will affect the whole of the enormous mileage that will ultimately form a network of railways all over Africa. Railway projectors should surely "think in continents."

But to my story.

Posted to a division in the nearer part of the western province, which is the most populous and the most Dutch, I was soon hard at work at the construction of the beginnings of the main line which now stretches nearly into Central Africa, and will ultimately form the Cape to Cairo Railway, the later dream of the youth from whom I had just then parted. This nearest western province district is perhaps less known to many than those further inland, the participants in the South African war passing through it hurriedly by rail to the front, many hundred miles beyond.

There is perhaps no country on our planet which has undergone such changes in a few decades as the southern corner of the Dark Continent. A pleasant twilight of general simplicity and contentment reigned over it for many years, and up to about a quarter of a century ago, when it was destined, owing to certain developments, to come into the garish light of day. Mr. H. G. Wells, the well-known writer, in a recent romance, *In the Days of*

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*the Comet*, imagines the sins and injustices, as he considers them, of the present social organization of the world to be swept away, not by any great moral regenerative force, but simply in consequence of the earth passing through the tail of a comet. A sort of green haze envelops the earth, which has the effect of cleansing and purifying the moral atmosphere, so that greed and falsehood pass away, and with them all the crime, and the extremes of wealth and poverty which cover the present earth as with a garment. It is a conception worthy of Dean Swift himself.

Let us apply it, in a reverse sense, and imagine the brilliant comet of gold and diamond discovery to have swept through the fair regions of South Africa, and by its sordid influence blurred those old virtues of trust, contentment, and peace which they had possessed of old. Through the finding of these glittering baubles we have the place full of the comforts, certainly, of modern civilization, but with them greedy millionaires, war and rapine, political contentions, race hatred, labour troubles, costly living, and all that is hostile to the simple life of the former time. That simple life, as the writer saw it over thirty years ago, is to a large extent gone, never to return. Long before that, when the Suez Canal was as yet unknown, and the Cape was a stage on the journey to India, it had some connection with the outer world. Indian officers took the opportunity of spending their leave there, to recruit their health in its genial climate, and several of them, charmed with its many natural beauties, spent all their retired lives there, while not infrequently charms of another sort led up to marriages with members of the old Dutch and French families. A society mostly centred about Capetown was thus set up, which, though generally poor, was courteous, hospitable and refined.

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The diversion of traffic to the East by the opening of the overland route, and later by the Suez Canal, left these quiet folk more to themselves, so that in many respects, at the transition time which my story covers, life became still more unsophisticated. Regarding the country, the Dutch word "Boer," it must be remembered, was simply farmer, not implying ignorance or uncouthness as our word "boor," which has the same origin. Ignorant, as a rule, the Boer undoubtedly is, though of course there are many exceptions, but they come from, generally speaking, a higher social origin than most other colonists, for in many instances their ancestors were Huguenots of high degree driven from France and Holland by the religious persecutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Pedigrees of some of the Cape families exist showing direct descent from the noblest families in Europe, but in most cases the names are sufficient evidence. Small farmers may be found having the proud names of Montmorency, De Villiers, Du Plessis, Joubert, Roux, De Retz, Van Reenan, and others of equal note, and it is characteristic that a comparatively small number of names is found among a fairly large population, indicating isolation and consequent intermarriage. The strenuous determination, the spirit of self-sacrifice, and the personal courage associated with these ancestral names are still found among these simple farmers, as we know to our cost by the numbers of our equally devoted men laid low in the recent war, and by the large amount of money spent before they were forced to give in.

The Boers work hard, rising in summer at 4 a.m., but sensibly dividing the hot days into two. At midday they have their principal meal, and then, during the heat of the day, they literally go to bed, shutting doors and blinds for a fairly prolonged sleep. As the sun begins



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to decline the Boer and his family rise and take to their work with renewed vigour.

The country passed through by the construction works which I had in hand at first was gently undulating with lofty mountains not far off on either hand, these showing, whether from their formation or not I do not know, the most brilliant rose-colour tints under a declining sun that I have ever seen. The country was generally treeless, except where intersected by water-courses, a line of foliage indicating their presence. Nestling among these trees, generally spreading oaks, lies the homestead solidly built of stone, with heavily thatched roof and many gables, which give the place quite an old-world look, rather than that with which we generally associate colonial dwellings. Inside, the old Dutch formality is indicated by the table in the living-room being strictly in the middle, and the straight-backed chairs being ranged at equal distances, with their backs to the wall, to which position they are carefully restored after meals. Hospitably invited to join one of these, the guest must wait patiently while a grace, probably of linked sweetness, but certainly long-drawn-out, is recited by the host, another of equal extent closing the function.

Cookery, as a rule, is on a higher level than in the more English colonies—an easy supremacy certainly. For instance, the making of coffee, which is preferred to tea, is generally better understood than among the English at home or abroad, and there are many tasty Cape dishes which should be better known at home.

The villages, hidden away among oak trees, are models of rural picturesqueness, the white deeply thatched cottages, the streets lined with green plots and old giant trees—for the Cape settlement is old—make up model garden cities. At the side of each street runs

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swiftly down a clear rivulet of sparkling water, the old Dutch settlers having located their hamlets on such gentle slopes that water from a spring above the site thus gravitates through it, bringing the cool and cleansing element to every man's door.

The prevalence of Roman-Dutch law tends to prevent the accumulation of property in few hands, and the rich from getting richer and the poor poorer. By this, the real property of the parent at death must be equally divided among his children, with due provision for the widow. Hence it is necessary to sell the property in order to divide the proceeds. Auction sales, therefore, are very frequent, and have given rise to a curious custom, unknown, as far as I am aware, elsewhere ; and the excitement which I have seen at some of these functions is only equalled by that of a foreign gaming table, for it is gambling pure and simple. A clerk stands under the auctioneer's rostrum, in the principal room of the farm-house, with a plateful of sovereigns before him, and as house, lands, cattle, and furniture are put up, the auctioneer offers one, two, five, or even ten sovereigns for a bid, according to the gradations in the bidding, and the value of the article on sale, the coins being handed over then and there. In this way bidding is so stimulated that the cost of the distribution or bonus, as it is called, which is charged against the estate, is amply covered by the enhanced value received. The gambling consists in many persons making a regular business of attending such auctions, without any intention or desire of buying anything. Such a one bids freely, however, in exchange for the bonus, trusting to others to outbid him, which indeed generally happens, his skill consisting in knowing when to stop. He makes an easily earned living in this way, but now and then he is left unwittingly the last bidder, and is saddled



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with a bedstead or a pair of horses he does not want, and has to resell, most probably at a loss.

All these customs and habits are still to be found in the remote country, but if reports be true, the town life is greatly changed since, for the chink of money has been heard in the land. Capetown society, for instance, was simple and friendly in character ; most people knew each other, and met at Government House and other functions, there being always a military and naval force to add their attractions to social gatherings. The few strangers that came soon ceased to bear that character if they possessed the necessary credentials. The same description might be given, to some extent, of the other large ports, for, besides the villages already spoken of, there were then no inland towns whatever, in the usual sense of the term. Now most of this is changed. The farms and villages remain much as they were, for the intensely conservative Cape farmer and his compatriot in the village change slowly, but the seaboard towns have grown to large dimensions with large alien populations and faiths. Railways have been pushed inland, and, far beyond points which were only reached by the explorer and the lion hunter a generation ago, there are now busy inland towns with up-to-date refreshment rooms, where the traveller, in his express train, halts on his way to still busier centres of population such as Kimberley and Johannesburg. In all of them palatial hotels have raised their unsightly heads, convenient and perhaps indispensable to modern commerce as it now exists, but quite out of harmony with the old South Africa which presents itself to my memory. Perhaps one instance out of many will best illustrate the change. There was no theatre in Capetown then, nor, as far as I know, in the whole of South Africa.

The western province, in which my work lay, is the

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country of ostrich farming, in which a farmer friend of mine had a curious and ludicrous experience. The male birds are very savage at the time of their adolescence, this attribute often being its first evidence. A Kaffir boy was driving some young birds into shelter when one got restive, and seemed as if about to attack him. The ostrich attacks kicking forward with his powerful claw, and with such force and speed that I have heard of a man on horseback trying to get away, and only escaping by throwing himself off and springing over a high fence. His leg was badly wounded, and his high boot and even the hard saddle were cut into strips. However, to return to my tale. The farmer, wishing to save the boy, approached the ostrich in order to control him, but soon found that the bird was becoming dangerous, so that he tried to get behind him and to stay there till help came, by catching hold of the bird's tail. It was like the old dilemma—if you have hold of a tiger's tail, which is better, to hold on or to leave go? In this case the ostrich danced round at such speed that my friend, still holding on, was flying round, with his feet off the ground, so violently that, after two or three turns, he had to let go, and was hurled by the centrifugal force several feet away, where he was sent sprawling on his face. He thought now his hour was come, but the ostrich, far more frightened than he was at this round dance, went off into space at motor-car speed, so far that it was not till after scouring the veldt with two horsemen for two or three days that he was recovered. The dancing alone would not have scared him, for it is one of the pastimes of these curious birds that they often waltz round just like human beings at a ball, except that they do not do it in couples. They are quite quiet under cover, and are therefore driven into sheds to be plucked.

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The ostrich is by no means such a fool as some people think him to be. He never, as is commonly said, hides his head in the sand, thinking to be thus safe from danger. The error arises from what is, on the contrary, an act of great wisdom. In the veldt the long erect neck and head of the bird are most conspicuous objects. Consequently when he wishes to conceal himself he sits down and stretches his neck and head along the ground, but his eyes and ears are as open as those of a burglar at work.

The allusion to a Kaffir boy just now reminds me of a smart black boy whom I had as a servant, so agile that he could catch a mouse in his hand, springing round the room after it under chairs and tables like a cat.

Except for my marriage, about this time, there were no incidents worthy of note during the hard-working period when the division of which I was in charge was being completed. But when the line was open for traffic I note an event because it is so unusual, that is, a case of the appreciation by a Colonial Government of its officers' services. I say unusual, though, personally, I have not had much to complain of in my long experience of colonial employment. But I have had a good deal to do with recommendation of subordinates in regard to their positions and emoluments, and I believe such employers lose a great deal by not sufficiently recognizing lights and shades in the capacities of those serving them. One man, in a responsible position, may save his salary twenty times over by some ingenious design or suggestion. Another will not trouble even to think, and does his duty like a mill horse, and often not nearly so well. Yet the differences in their respective rewards are so insignificant that the better man sees no object in making use of his powers,

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and the Government loses the benefit of them. It may be said that such men may find more encouragement in serving private companies or employers, who generally know their business better, but in many of our colonies practically all public works are carried out by the Governments, and to be better treated in his profession means that he must migrate—not always a practicable or convenient expedient.

The exception to be noted as leading to this dissertation occurred on the completion of my length of railway at an early date, at the express wish of the Government, this being carried out without contractors, contrary to usual home practice. A banquet was held in the town to which the line had reached in honour of the occasion, at which a Cabinet Minister was the chief guest. In his speech, to my great surprise and satisfaction, he announced the intention of the Government to hand me a cheque for a hundred guineas in addition to my salary in recognition of my exertions to attain the desired end. This was a bold departure from the hidebound routine prevailing generally with not only Governments but large private companies, which, for most of my professional life, I was destined to serve. However, long experience in official positions has taught me that this much-abused routine is practically unavoidable where a very large staff of employees has to be dealt with, though, no doubt, it is often pushed to unnecessary and sometimes ridiculous extremes.

A case occurs to me which might have been incorporated in Gilbert's satire on this subject in *The Mikado*. It is unavoidable that, in large businesses, many letters are sent away in the name of the chief of an office, but signed for him by an assistant, the former perhaps never seeing them or even knowing their contents.

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Letters of censure, however, should never be so dealt with, as in the following case.

A colleague of mine being obliged to report his head clerk to the engineer-in-chief for some irregularity, a reply was received, signed by a deputy, stating that owing to certain extenuating circumstances no further punishment would be given than a severe reprimand, which was directed to be administered. My colleague being then away, the letter was opened by the incriminated clerk himself, who, acting for his principal, forthwith proceeded to reprimand himself severely as clerk, and in the former character replied that he had had the honour to receive the instructions and had severely reprimanded Mr. Z. accordingly, and then signed the letter for his principal. Whether this vicarious way of doing business had anything to do with the further career of the clerk it is impossible to say ; but the reprimand was not of much effect. He went from bad to worse, and, finding himself in financial difficulties owing to gambling, was discovered one morning in his office chair dead from self-inflicted shots through the head.

After the completion of the portion of the line which was the cause of my reward, there came a transfer a long way up country, to what is called the Karoo, a desolate and almost uninhabited region with a glorious climate, though rather hot and dry in summer, so much so that our corrugated iron-roofed wooden house had to be covered with bushes held on by wires, so as to keep the sun from the iron. Snakes were unpleasantly prevalent, and on one occasion when walking with my wife side by side, she would have stepped on a dangerous one had I not made a very sudden and forcible movement to arrest her. Tarantulas, though not as large as the Indian ones, infested the houses, but their speed was rather too much for the black boy. Troops of

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baboons used to come down from the kopjes, but they did not trouble us except for some nervousness about our first-born, who used, occasionally, to wander from the house ; nor did the so-called tigers, really leopards, these rarely coming down from the hills. Springbok were there in herds—most graceful animals. They travel at great speed, mostly in single file, and when they meet a small depression a foot or two wide, each one, one after the other, springs high into the air, covering, perhaps, twenty feet in the leap with wondrous grace and agility. This gives them their name. On one occasion, attracted no doubt by the scent of some provisions, a tiger cat, of which there were many about, got into the pantry of the house of one of my assistants. It broke nearly everything in the place, including practically all the crockery, before it was shot. As, apart from the loss, there was no shop within some hundreds of miles, the glittering language of the owner's heart, if not of his lips, may be supposed.

Talking of snakes, some people have strange tastes. A Cape civil servant used to keep quite a number of them in his office, some of them of a deadly character. They seemed to know him, crawling all over his desk and papers, and even coiling themselves round his neck and body. It was noted that his visitors were limited to those whose business was of an urgent nature only, and that they went away directly that was finished.

But the worst wild beasts with which I had to deal were human. In order to induce labourers to come into such a district, wages at high rates were offered, and even then the white men were, to a large extent, the most cut-throat-looking rascals that I ever had to deal with—ship deserters and others of all nations, Greeks, Italians, French, and English. Besides these, were imported Zulus, Kaffirs, Basutos, who were

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pecially sent with their headmen from the eastern provinces and Zululand. Some of these had come across country under the leadership of a Captain R——, a rollicking Irishman who had gained their confidence, and spoke some of their languages fluently. He trusted them so much that he was unarmed on his long journey, only carrying a shillelagh or knobkerry, as it is locally named.

On arrival of his party at the town where the Karoo districts began they were met by the Minister for Native Affairs. He made them all sit round in a circle under a spreading tree, and made a speech to them in their native language, they every now and then giving grunts of satisfaction as he assured them of the fatherly care which they would receive. I shall not easily forget the scene, the two or three white men, and, squatting round, the hundreds of lightly-clothed savages eagerly listening and, through their chiefs, occasionally putting in a question. Camped on the works, the chiefs or headmen did nothing, but were necessary for keeping order among the tribes for which each was responsible, foremen having to be separately employed to direct the work. The Zulus were splendid men physically, and worked well. At each throw of the shovel they shouted in concert, "Cetewayo!" with a long stress on the penultimate syllable. He was then their king with whom we afterwards contended in the Zulu war.

## CHAPTER X

Receiving a deputation with pistols—Preparations for my murder—Sworn in as a magistrate—An escape—Trying a murderer—Extraordinary pay-day incident—Feeding the men—A Zulu difficulty—An unpublished incident of the Boer war—A singular confessional—Anecdotes—Travelling billiards—The Governor's visit and the lady's maid—A matrimonial raid—More anecdotes—Anthony Trollope—Up-country customs and scenery—Sir Bartle Frere—Comparison between Indian and South African natives.

**I**N the last chapter it was stated that I had in addition to the natives a large number of white men employed, most of them, as I have mentioned, the off-scourings of their respective nationalities, though, of course, there were many exceptions.

These white men were, some of them, so turbulent, that I well remember the picture of my colleague in charge of the next district sitting at his office table with a loaded revolver in each hand well displayed, while receiving a deputation of some aggrieved workmen, and I found some Greeks sharpening their evil-looking knives at the grindstone in the yard of my workshops, with the intention, as I afterwards heard, of making some holes in me. This misfortune was only averted by a better understanding of the reason of their grievances, of which, however, I knew nothing at the time.

In order that I should have authority in dealing with such people as these, I was sworn in before the Chief Justice as a magistrate, there being none within a considerable distance, and I had many cases before me,



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while I was obliged to build a small lock-up in which those I committed for trial could be confined till an opportunity for removal occurred. This was a small stone building containing rooms, each with a strongly locked door, and in place of a window a narrow slit eight or nine feet from the floor, about seven or eight inches wide. Owing to the narrowness of the latter, combined with its height from the floor, I thought escape was impossible, yet a native culprit got out through one of these holes during the night, and we never caught him. In one case where a murder had been committed, I had, for want of evidence, to discharge a man whom I feel morally certain, to this day, to be the criminal. The fatal stab was given in a drunken crowd, and no one could give any clear statement as to who did it. There was only evidence of previous ill-feeling, but this was insufficient.

Needless to say, the monthly pay-day was an anxious time, in which the men were filled up first with money and, in many cases after, with drink, leading to various scimmages and general violence. The paymaster, who was specially sworn in as a magistrate, travelled up from Capetown, accompanied by an armed escort, to pay the men. He travelled in a four-horse conveyance, followed by several vans containing hawkers, who had thus the opportunity of selling their wares to the men after receiving their wages.

On one occasion, the paymaster had paid the wages at my head-quarters and on the line ahead, when about midnight I was awakened by his unexpected return. By some mistake his money had run out, and to face the next head-quarters camp without it was as much as his life was worth. I gave him all that was in my local chest, which was not much, and then, at my suggestion, we went round, in the middle of the night,

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to all the temporary drinking saloons and the hawkers' vans round my head-quarters, and in exchange for Government cheques, which the proprietors were only too glad to get in exchange, we collected as much cash as would see us through the emergency, the money being, of course, the same as that which the paymaster had paid out the previous day. This gave the time necessary to obtain a further supply of cash, and probably averted a serious riot.

Struck by the number of hawkers' vans which usually followed the pay-cart, I suggested to the Government that some arrangement might be made with the Capetown banks, so that one or more of them should have carts with clerks following up. In this way, such men as chose to do it might have the opportunity of lodging some of their wages, by which system, I am sure, great good might have been done. But nothing came of it. This reminds me of a deputation which waited on Archbishop Whately, to whom I referred in the early part of these memories. They set forth their grievances and the remedies by the Government which they proposed, on which that sagacious prelate replied, that the course recommended was so sensible, so practicable, and in every way so suited to the needs of the occasion, that he was quite sure that—it would never be adopted.

There was no general contractor to do the work, as is usually the case with similar construction at home. Acting for the Government, I employed labour direct, as a rule, but in some cases small contracts were given to groups of men with a leader, and a rough-and-ready way of arranging for these was by a sort of Dutch auction, as many of the men could not read nor write, and could not understand the nature of a written agreement. The auction would probably be held out in the

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open, on the site of the work to be done, one man bidding, say thirty pounds, on the part of his gang, another twenty-eight, and so on till the lowest bid was made. Of course, some of the men were not very experienced as to what it would cost to carry out the work, and discretion had to be used not to allow the bids to get too low through the eagerness of the contestants to get the work, as the men had generally no capital to fall back on, and failure to complete the contract would ruin the men and cause expense in many ways to the Government.

All these men, white and black, had to be fed by the Government, there being no provisions to be had otherwise in the desert, and this was, of course, considered in their wages. A contractor was employed for this, who delivered meat, bread, tobacco, sugar, tea, etc. to the gangs all along the line daily. In dealing with this a characteristic incident arose. The ration contractor asked permission to deliver double rations on alternate days during winter, when the meat, etc. could easily be kept, and seeing then no objection I consented. I found, however, that the Zulus could not be got to understand this arrangement, and ate the whole of the two days' supply on the day on which it was delivered, so that they had nothing the next day, consequently the daily delivery had to be resumed, or there would have been a disturbance.

When I look back on these and other incidents in dealing with semi-savage peoples, black and white, with all their perplexities and dangers, I cannot help wondering at the magnificent impudence born of that little knowledge which is so dangerous, of some Fleet Street writers and their "Constant Readers," in their safe and comfortable quarters, when they tell colonists how to manage their own affairs. But after all, perhaps, news-

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papers feel bound to tell their constant readers only what they want to hear. For instance, a story, possibly untrue, was told to me quite lately, of a returned wounded soldier during the Boer war, going to a London editor, thinking that the publication of the story of his mishap would be worth money. This was a very graphic account of the storming of a kopje held by the Boers. The British troops, he said, took two hours to go up, and two minutes to come down, the narrator during the latter operation having got a bullet in his hind-quarters. The editor did not think that it would suit.

But to return to the older time. Far away as we were from civilization, the Government had to provide a doctor and a small hospital for each district, while we were visited by an Anglican and a Roman Catholic parson, towards whom the district engineers afforded a willing hospitality. A curious result of the no doubt necessary administration of the diocese to which the Roman priest belonged, occurred more than once. A broad river adjoining my camp was the boundary of the diocese, we being just outside of it. He could carry out anywhere all his ministrations except receiving confessions, which duty could not be performed outside his own diocese unless, I suppose, in cases of emergency. The wife of one of my assistants belonged to his flock, and she and the priest had to go over to a point beyond the centre of the broad river bed, which was almost always nearly dry, where, under the shelter of a rock, the confessions were duly made and the absolution given.

The reverend father was an eager and accomplished whist player, one of that kind who carries cards about with him in his pockets, and would play all night if he could get anyone to stay up with him. I do not know if this jovial old padre is still alive, but if beyond the realms of whist, in view of his frequent eagerness to establish

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his long suit, his epitaph might well include the well-known tombstone phrase, "In joyful expectation of the last trump."

Our doctor was an Irishman, who had a professional friend of the same nationality occasionally visiting him, the latter doing a great deal to dissipate the monotony of Karoo life by his humorous tales.

The following I think was his.

That singular phenomenon, an economical Irishman, in buying spurs, asked for a single one at half the price of a pair.

"An' what, sorr, will ye do with wan spur?" said the shopman.

"Shure, ye omathawn, if I get wan side av me horse to go, the other side has got to go wid it."

The doctor had some good Irish bulls, which, as a rule, do not arise from stupidity, but from thinking too quickly. For instance, as was said in a colonial parliament, "The only way to prevent what is past is to put a stop to it before it begins."

An Irish temperance lecturer, after instancing the awful end of a drunkard, added: "He had neither wife nor child; good thing for them, wasn't it?" And finally, An Irishman and his supposed friend, seeing each other at the opposite side of the street, and crossing to shake hands, both discovered that it was neither of them.

To relieve the monotony of existence, the engineers, doctors, and other officials provided a joint billiard-table, for which a special shed was built successively at each head-quarters, about twenty-five miles apart, the table being moved forward as the completion of the line advanced, so as to keep near the greatest number. Occasional visits to colleagues on business or pleasure gave many opportunities for enjoying a game.

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On one occasion it was announced that the Governor of the colony would inspect the line, accompanied by his wife. There was no accommodation for the party beside that afforded by our wooden huts, but by a little rearrangement of rooms there was no trouble in providing for Sir Henry and Lady Barkly; the only difficulty was Lady Barkly's maid, as to whom great perplexity arose. This was got over at the first head-quarters beyond civilization by putting up a special hut of one room for this important female's use, but the sensible Lady Barkly, probably foreseeing difficulty, prudently did not bring her. However, ever after, the little out-buildings put up at each station for possible extra guests were always termed "Lady's Maids," and very shortly they were in full use, as the following shows.

Practically all the staff were bachelors, more or less eligible in the mating sense. A high official's wife, pitying their loneliness, conceived the idea of taking a bevy of pretty girls over the line for an excursion. This, of course, was only for a week or two's amusement; there was no ulterior view—oh, dear, no! not at all. Nothing of the kind. They came up, and picnics and all sorts of diversions being arranged, all went merrily. Some said, however, that there was method in all this frivolity. Whether this was the case or not, every single girl of that lively party was shortly the wearer of an engagement ring. The staff, who were wholly English, fell simply annihilated before the rush of colonial fascination, and our bachelor community became a married one almost as rapidly as a Chicago pig is converted into sausages. If the Jameson raid, which followed this one a few years after, had been as well organized, history might have been different.

On such visitations as these the servant difficulty was great, for even when obtainable their quality was only

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what is called commercially "fair to middling." We grew our own vegetables, and once our "general" came saying that the French beans gathered would not be enough for dinner. Told by her mistress that the quantity should be quite sufficient, what was our surprise to see that she was justified, from her own standpoint, for she had podded the beans like peas and cooked only the seeds. Another, a man this time, was called Jack Snake, a bite from one of these reptiles, though not killing him, having left his brain in an apparently dazed condition thereafter, and he was always bungling, though a willing soul. In his time, we were expecting several to dinner one evening as they passed through, and, inspecting the arrangements, found that the table had been laid with all the knives on the left and the forks on the right of each person's seat. On this mistake being pointed out, Jack Snake proposed, in order to save time, as the food and the guests were ready, to turn the table end for end, which he thought would make all right without touching the knives and forks.

Generally speaking, the Government officers were capable and efficient men, but, as in all services, there were exceptions. One of the latter, whose services were being dispensed with, I met when travelling to Capetown on business. It was in a small roadside inn, in which, being crowded, he and I were obliged to occupy one bedroom. He had too faithfully followed the perverted maxim, to drink is human, to get drunk is divine, and was then in an advanced state of *delirium tremens*. I thought it prudent to hide my razors, which I was glad I had done, when he insisted on keeping the candles alight all night, for, not being able to sleep, he walked up and down the room till morning, muttering threats to all sorts of people. As he was a powerful man and hardly responsible for his actions,

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I did not have much of a rest myself that night. I think that he was one of the two heroes of the following anecdote. The two, somewhat fuddled, were coming from a dinner, driving themselves in a Cape cart, which is a two-wheeled vehicle drawn by two horses. One, noticing that the reins were rather slack, and that the horses were wandering from side to side, as if they also had been to the dinner, called to his companion to keep the animals better in hand, when he was astonished at the reply, "Why, I thought you were driving." The reins were, in fact, held by neither.

It was at the public table of a village hotel near this that a colleague of mine met that prolific and entertaining author, Anthony Trollope, who was then touring South Africa. It happened that there was at this establishment a very well-known and popular black waiter called Anthony, and happening, when waiting, to be at the back of the greater Anthony, someone opposite said, "Anthony, my boy, just pass us the potatoes." The great author, not knowing of his namesake behind, and probably not realizing that anyone could possibly fail to recognize him, whose visit was the topic of the colony, bridled up and said, "Sir, my name is Mr. Trollope."

A trip further inland revealed the more primitive habits of the up-country Boers, whose farms are great distances apart, perhaps fifty to a hundred miles. This reminds me that they seldom talk of miles in the Cape interior. The usual travelling pace by driving is about six miles an hour, including what are called outspans, that is to say, short rests or feeds at intervals. Sometimes the halt only consists of unharnessing the horses for a roll in the dust, which they thoroughly enjoy, and which appears to give them renewed vigour. Distances are therefore always spoken of in measures of time.



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For instance, if a farm is forty-eight miles away it is said to be eight hours distant.

One of the queerest of these up-country customs in the outlying farms in that of people, especially the old, keeping their coffins ready-made in the loft in view of the inevitable grim visitor when he comes. The reason for this is clear, when it is realized that the materials and workmanship of this necessary article may not be had possibly within two or three days' journey. It is characteristic of the fortitude and grim determination of this race that they can live cheerfully under such a weirdly furnished upper story.

This trip took us through vast dry inland districts in which the *mirage* was especially prominent. Constantly spreading out before us were wide sheets of calm water in the surface of which trees, rocks, and bushes beyond were distinctly reflected. There could be positively no mistake about it, clear and distinct as it could possibly be, with occasional islets or tufts of grass, equally reflected, appearing above the water. Nevertheless, on driving up, the whole sheet of water would gradually vanish like Creusa's ghost—

“Ter frustra comprehensa manus effugit imago,  
Par levibus ventis.”

Returning easterly towards the coast, we passed through the magnificent Meiring's Poort, one of the finest bits of scenery which I have seen. The road, alongside of a small stream, which it crosses and re-crosses many times, winds through the pass in the mountain range, high perpendicular walls of rock rising up sheer on either side, the passage being scarce wide enough for the babbling stream and the winding road. So narrow is it that, except for about an hour at mid-day, or when a turn in the kloof exposes it to the

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morning or evening sun, the latter's rays never penetrate below. The waterfalls tumbling through clefts on either side and fringed with forests of ferns break the quiet silence of the scene and join the main stream which, like a silver chain, threads through the glen. The brilliant reddish colour of the rocks and the narrow rifts through vertical precipices standing up on each side were almost exactly like the pictures I have since seen of the approaches to the ancient city of Petra between the Red Sea and the Dead Sea, leading to its celebrated rock-carved palaces. The South African scene, however, was on a much vaster scale, and it is difficult to realize the enormous number of centuries which have been occupied by the little stream cutting through the rock so as to make such a deep chasm.

The Montague Pass lower down is of a quite different character, the road falling more rapidly down the side of the mountain far above the bottom of the gorge. From it are beautiful and extensive views.

The transport riders, many of whom with their long teams of oxen—often as many as twenty-four to a wagon—we met on the journey, are a curious race, knowing each animal and its disposition, every-one having its name. If there be a specially stubborn and self-willed beast, he is generally called "Inglischmann." They are very dexterous at picking out and reaching an individual bullock, with the attention of the long whip-lash.

One of the curiosities of the country, which is often met with on a tour like this, is the mantis, an insect something of the shape of a gigantic grasshopper, and called the praying insect or Hottentot God. It is so named from its constant attitude of prayer, standing with its arms raised in the posture of a saint on a tomb.

A visit to Capetown after our return brought me into

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contact with a notable personage, the late Sir Bartle Frere, then Governor, whose policy had such an effect on the future of South Africa. He had been Governor of Bombay, and had held other important posts in India during the Mutiny, where his forcible action prognosticated his firm rule at the Cape. Such a strong man was he that, since the time of William IV, he was the only one at the head of affairs in any part of the British Empire who actually dismissed his ministers, this happening at the Cape. He also committed this country to the first annexation of the Transvaal. Nevertheless, this vigorous pro-consul had the shyness of a child in social gatherings, which defect, during his career, he must have had ample opportunities of mastering. It was common knowledge, but I had an unusual opportunity of noticing it, for I had gone to one of his receptions with the Dean of Capetown, and, there being some mistake in the time at which our conveyance was to call for us, all the guests had gone, and we were alone with His Excellency for a short time until the vehicle turned up. He seemed to be quite embarrassed at what, after all, was a not very terrible situation, and he looked relieved when the welcome grinding of the wheels was heard in the carriage drive.

Before my departure from South Africa, which I shall presently deal with, I would like to say something about the natives in comparison with those of India, especially from the labour standpoint with which I have had so much to do. Many people at home think all black men to be much the same—all niggers—a contemptuous name which, by the way, I do not think I have ever heard applied by white men to black ones in either country, though the impression at home is otherwise. There are, I believe, in India many more languages and dialects than in Europe, signifying the number of types, so I must be

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regarded as speaking generally only. The natives there, belonging to an ancient civilization, have among them handicraftsmen of practically every kind, some of them very highly skilled. From any village you can get a silversmith who, sitting in your verandah, works up anything you please. Give him a few rupees, and he will melt them down then and there, and manipulate them into delicate rings, bangles, or brooches, of his own design. Send to the same village for a *durzee* or tailor and, sitting tailor fashion in a corner of the verandah, he will turn you out any garment you want, from material supplied, in as good style as that of a city firm. Then, where are to be got better cooks, when the poor material they have to deal with is considered, and their two or three rough utensils? Turning to the rougher trades, such as masons, bricklayers, and blacksmiths, they are little inferior to European ones, except in physical strength. The labourer is hard-working, though generally his bodily powers are limited, and if he often takes a day off for more or less sleep, this is due to that cause, and because his wants being so few, five days' pay is sufficient to support him. His domestic requirements are so few that the women do navvy work as well as the men, so that the family wages are thus much increased. Though physically weak, the endurance of the Indian native is remarkable, as they walk with a load on their heads for incredible distances, and as groom, in the case of a fifteen or twenty mile ride, will follow on foot almost as fast as, in that climate, his master will care to ride.

The Kaffir, though having some good qualities, is a complete contrast to all this. He has a splendid physique, but he is not only born but lives and dies tired. He has no perseverance and leaves his work at the slightest excuse, often when on works taking up his few belongings and decamping, sometimes without even

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asking for any wages then due to him. He has practically no trade except looking after cattle, and fighting, the latter, as we know only too well, being the only business that he takes up in earnest. Thus, in his own country, he finds Indians and Chinamen imported to do much of his work for him.

# EUROPE ONCE MORE

## CHAPTER XI

England again—Visits—Literary work: editorship of a London magazine—Troubles of an editor—Anecdotes—Making new books out of old ones—More anecdotes—Hansard II—Garrick Club—The careworn city—George Macdonald—More stories—Appointment in Spain.

**F**ATE seemed now thoroughly to have made up her mind that my life was to be that of a rolling stone which was destined to gather no other amount of moss than a cosmopolitan experience of the ways of the world.

My up-country district was now approaching completion, the next one to be undertaken being much further inland, and having been five years in South Africa, I obtained leave for a short visit home with wife and children. However, I was destined never to return. This was much to my regret, as I liked the place, the climate, and the people, with some of whom I was now connected by marriage and by friendship. But *Dis aliter visum*.

After a short stay in England I was so far on my way back as to have my heavy baggage delivered at the docks and passages partly paid, when suddenly news arrived that the Cape Parliament had decided against any further railway extension for the time. This meant that I would probably find my engagement terminated on my return to the colony, with no other engineering

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opening to be looked for there, so I arranged terms with Sir Charles Gregory, the engineering representative of the Cape Government in London, not to go back. Some years later, when railway extension revived, Sir Charles asked me to go out to the colony again, but having other business in hand then I could not do so.

Some visits to relatives and others in the country followed ; in one case I met an elderly cousin, whom I mention as an instance of vigorous old age, as he hunted three times a week nearly up to his death at eighty-four. Another visit was to a former assistant of mine who had preceded me home, and had married the daughter of a Sussex baronet. He lived near the latter's place, and it was on the lawn of this fine mansion that we were initiated into the mysteries of the then novel game of lawn tennis.

Engineering work was more slack than when I returned from India, and in addition there was the fact, to which I have previously alluded, of a civil engineer's absence abroad for some years causing him to be forgotten at home. Casting about for the good that sometimes idle hands find to do, I took up some occupation at working up what was then a new patent in connection with the electric deposition of certain metals, and with it some literary work. This latter was not absolutely new to me, though I have not mentioned it previously.

I had contributed to periodicals before I went to India and after, and now, buying a half share in that well-known and long-established magazine, *Colburn's United Service*, I became its editor, being assisted, as regards naval matters, by the late Admiral, then Captain Bedford Pim, M.P. for Gravesend, and in military affairs by an experienced writer, an Army colonel of distinction, who ably continued the policy of the magazine. In this position I had to read, mark, learn, and digest MSS.,

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reading all sorts of scrawls and scribbles, for that heaven-sent blessing to editors, the typewriter, was then unknown. Talking of scribbles, the printer of the magazine, who also had printed some of John Stuart Mill's books, told me that his copy was in execrable writing, blotted and interlined and full of erasures, scrawled over backs of envelopes, half-sheets of paper, and all sorts of scraps, and often unnumbered, a complete contrast to the finished article as it left the press, perhaps the clearest and most limpid prose known in English literature. I had to reject, to cut or extend, like an editorial Procrustes, giant and dwarfish contributions, to sniff out libels, to worry with mixed metaphors and solecisms, to detect and often to condone plagiarisms, to value accepted work, and generally to exorcise literary microbes of all kinds, besides interviewing the rejected and the dejected, and, as Thomas Hood wrote when in a similar position, in addition to taking articles, I thought articles, dreamt articles, and wrote articles to fill up yawning gaps.

While engaged on this work, I had the opportunity of meeting or corresponding with many literary men, and more especially those of both Services whose pens, if not mightier, were more in requisition, in those piping times, than their swords. Among them were Sir Frederick, now Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, on whom I used to call at Clarges Street, Piccadilly, where he lived, and whose life, written by Mr. Charles Low, appeared as a serial in the magazine, being afterwards published in book form ; Captain, since Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge ; Lovett Cameron, the noted Central African explorer ; Sir Sherston Baker, Bart. ; Mr., now Sir T. H. Laughton ; Professor Holland, who was Professor of International Law at Oxford ; Mr., since Sir William White, Chief Constructor of the Navy ;



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Colonel Knollys ; Admiral of the Fleet Sir Thomas Symonds ; Mr. Laing Meason, the war correspondent ; and many others.

I recall a story told me by the last named which, as far as I know, has never been published. He was in the Franco-German war, representing his paper on the German side, when one day he was surprised and taken by some French *francs-tireurs*, who, it is well known, were simply guerillas, not particularly trained in the usages of war. Recognizing a foreign accent in his French, they would not believe or could not understand his story, and tying him hand and foot were about to shoot him as a spy. In this awful and wholly undeserved predicament, a sudden thought came to him, one of those inspirations which only dire extremity brings forth, and he pleaded that a priest should be sent for from the neighbouring village to hear his confession and give him absolution in his dying hour. This they agreed to, and to the more intelligent *curé*, the supposed spy explained his position, and he was saved to continue his graphic accounts for the benefit of the English reader, and to become one of my best and steadiest contributors.

Besides editing and contributing to the magazines, I wrote for other publications. A little paper called *Fact* was edited by a retired major who subsequently succeeded me in editing *Colburn*, and he was very greedy for facts for his journal. One I gave him which I could vouch for, as witnessed by a naval connection of mine who was present. He, with others of the Fleet, was at a fancy ball at Lord V——'s in the south of Ireland, where one of the guests came attired as a conventional Irish peasant—tail coat, knee breeches, grey stockings, battered tall hat with a pipe in its band, etc. etc. But this was not all, for he had brought right into

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the ball-room a pig, which he thought he was going to restrain by a rope, tied Irish fashion, to his hind leg. All went fairly well until the music and dancing began, when owing to these, or to the unusual sight of so much "quality" around him, the pig got excited, and rushing round, the rope got entangled among the dancers' legs, many of whom were soon sprawling on the floor.

I learnt while at this occupation the great business of making new literature, so called, out of old. Many an hour did I spend at the British Museum library compiling information for articles, and seeing there the great army of authors making new books out of old ones. This sort of literary Bovril is, of course, necessary, as the public has thus brought before it suitable summaries from various sources which it has no opportunity of collecting for itself; but to call such compilations literature is rather an abuse of terms, originality, which is the essence of it, being as invisible, but not nearly so effective, as a microbe. There was some truth in Disraeli's apparent paradox that books are the destruction of education.

"The rain, it raineth every day,  
On the just and the unjust fellah,  
But more upon the just, because  
The unjust takes the just's umbrella."

This doggerel, said to be by a humorous bishop, which I came across the other day, reminds me of a City adventure, if I may call it so, of this period. Hitherto I had been able, metaphorically, to wear in my button-hole the whitey-brown flower of a moderately blameless life, but as far as suspicion goes I was now nearly to be deprived of it. In fact, I was the object of a stop-thief chase along the most crowded part of Fleet Street, which, of all places, is supposed to be the head-quarters of all that is honest and true.

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I was lunching in an eating-house in that neighbourhood. By the way, why do we frenchify this good old intelligible word? The Savoy, Prince's, or Carlton of our days are nothing more. Why not call them so? In the old eating-houses two or three diners were separated from the others by high partitions, as if, as much as possible, we should feed in private. I remember in India, in building a large railway terminus, I had one native employed whose caste required that nobody should see him eat, so he was allowed to build himself a small hut, about five feet square, of the stones prepared for the building, inside which he retired at meal times. Much more absurd, because not part of his religion, was the old-fashioned John Bull idea of segregation in dining.

But to my story. Half "through," as the Yankees say, a man opposite, who was entirely through, paid his score, rose, and, taking my umbrella from the stand, went away. Happening to look up a moment later I missed my property from the group, and acting on the spur of the moment, jumped up to follow the man who had just left, and at the door, seeing him some distance up the street, gave chase. Meantime the waiter, assuming that I had eaten the best part of a lunch and had gone without paying for it, was after me in a moment, crying, "Stop him, stop him!" But the object of my chase being overtaken, and his inadvertence acknowledged, the matter was explained, and I was exonerated.

One of my contributors, an American by birth, though the author of several brilliant French novels, was married about this time. The bridegroom had been supplying me with several chapters of a serial which he told me he had not written himself, and he would not then disclose the name of the author, who

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was simply designated by initials. The story created some sensation, and there was some curiosity as to the identity of the writer. After the marriage ceremony, which took place at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, a sumptuous breakfast was given at a neighbouring hotel, not like that poor substitute for it of the present day, chiefly an exhibition of plate and jewellery extorted, by a remorseless custom, from more or less unwilling victims, and flanked by the unsubstantial sandwich and trifle of the light refreshment order. There were a good many good talkers and speech-makers present, and just before the speech which I had to contribute, Captain Bedford Pim told me that he was commissioned to inform me of the fact, with the view to my disclosure of it, that the writer of the mysterious tale was the bride, a beautiful compatriot of the bridegroom.

Talking of speeches, a debating society existed then at Hampstead, where we lived, discussing all things, human and Divine, a much rarer institution then than now. Captain Bedford Pim and other prominent men were occasional speakers. At one of our meetings a young man came in and joined in the debate, showing extraordinary powers of oratory, and quoting liberally from classic and other authors ; in fact, eclipsing all of our members. After his speech he slipped out, and on inquiry no one knew who he was, and the mystery remains. He appears to have entered in the train of one of the members, passing in surreptitiously as one of the visitors entitled to be so introduced. A sort of unclassified brilliant comet sweeping through and departing from our smaller orbit—or could it have been the ghost of one of the members of the noted Kitcat Club, who used to meet at Hampstead with Addison, Steele, and others nearly two centuries ago, or of any of the other intellectual celebrities for which, in later times, the place has been noted ?

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The term "Hansard" is well known among parliamentarians in England and the colonies as the volume containing verbatim reports of speeches, but many, especially abroad, do not know its origin. Luke Hansard was printer to the House of Commons in the early part of last century, and his sons and successors have since had charge of this important work. I was introduced by a member at this time to Hansard II, a courteous old gentleman well past middle life, who, no doubt, could have told many a strange tale. With my experience, then and since, of many of the debates in the mother and daughter parliaments of the Empire, some of which official duty compelled me to hear, I have often thought of how the business of this harmless family has been the channel for such torrents of turbid twaddle as some of the deliberations of our legislators might well be named.

I used to dine occasionally with a friend, an old General, at the Garrick Club, which originated, I believe, among actors and playwrights, but had by that time widened its doors to others, many military men belonging to it. The cooking was sublime; in fact, so much so that dining there one evening and hearing that the Civil Service Stores next door was all in a blaze, the General told the excited waiter to come and tell us when the danger was so great that we *must* leave our table, *not before*, and all the excitement in the meantime did not divert his attention from the fare before us, which indeed deserved all of it. The club, however, was not injured. *Par parenthèse*, why are not cooks, like other artists, made peers and baronets?

Business in this portion of my career drew me daily to the City, and I have never lost the impression, not experienced, I think, anywhere else, except perhaps in New York, of the anxious careworn faces of the men,

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young and old, rich and poor alike, which one meets in that great centre of business. Mostly, I suppose, men fairly well off, having regard to the average, but with brows wrinkled over, striving to be better off, illustrating what Oscar Wilde called the strange poverty of the rich. The theory of compensations, as it has been called, certainly fits in with my experiences, those in the worst circumstances being often gifted with the happiest lives. The old Arabian tale points a true moral. The King fell ill, and the wise men said that the only thing to cure him was to wear the shirt of the happiest man in the kingdom. Search was made, and after much trouble the man was at last found, but he was so poor that he did not possess a shirt.

A great intellectual treat at Hampstead was the hearing of the lectures of the late Dr. George Macdonald, the novelist, on Shakespeare's plays. The personal appearance of the lecturer was remarkable, a great lion-like head with profuse and shaggy grey hair. I do not think these lectures were ever published, and to the notes I took of them I owe a great deal in the preparation of lectures which many years after I delivered on *Macbeth*, *As You Like It*, the ideal womanhood of Plato and of Shakespeare, and others.

The parson officiating at the wedding referred to a few pages back was a contributor to the magazine, and his memory was quite a storehouse of clerical anecdotes of the humorous class, which he had picked up, and some of them which follow remain in my memory. In fact, whether it is owing to the solemnity of their ordinary functions, or to the kinship of the sublime and the ridiculous, I do not know, but clerics seem to appreciate humour more than other men. Rabelais, Fuller, Sterne, Sydney Smith, Barham, Deans Ramsay, Pigou and Hole are conspicuous instances.

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At a harvest in which sheaves of corn and other things attractive to the bovine palate were plentifully distributed through a country church, a cow, attracted by these, entered during the service, and before she could be stopped got into the centre aisle. This being too narrow for her to be turned round, she had to be driven by the churchwardens right up to near the chancel and ejected through the vestry.

The rector at one of three meetings of a confirmation class commenced: "The week before last we took 'the World,' last week we spoke of 'the Flesh,' and this week we go to 'the Devil.'"

The following is a reflection, not undeserved, upon the way that the magnificent old-world diction of the book of Common Prayer is often slurred over by the clergy. A Wesleyan housemaid in a bishop's family, going to an Anglican church for the first time, which happened to be when the collect for Ash Wednesday was read, said, on return, that she did not like the service at all, for the minister had said: "Almighty and Everlasting God, who hatest nothing but the 'ousemaid——"

Theatricals were at this time tending towards the more all-round excellency in acting which, derived from the French, was rapidly superseding the "star," or what might be called the "Jupiter and Venus," system. Henry Irving and Ellen Terry were in their prime, but one considerably outshone the other. To go to another branch of the art, the Vokes family were inimitable in what might be termed farcical gymnastics. There was a scene in a play acted by them representing the cabin of a ship which was supposed to be heavily rolling. During the whole action of the scene, the characters representing passengers, stewards carrying loaded trays, and others kept swaying as they walked, one always

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at the same time, in the same direction, and to the same extent as the others. It was thus impossible for the audience to avoid the illusion that the whole stage was rolling, and I am sure there must have been sometimes cases of sea-sickness among the spectators.

But these pleasant times were to cease, and the time came when the rolling stone was to have another shove. Nearly all except very high-class literary magazines were then reduced to the price of one shilling, the price of *Colburn* being still half a crown. Hence, it was not getting on financially as well as it might. Failing to induce my co-proprietor to risk the reduction in price to the lower sum, I sold out ; but my expectation of the reduction being a wise course, though temporarily causing a loss, was correct, for later proprietors lowered the price, and the magazine has had, I believe, a prosperous career since. The name "Colburn" in the title was subsequently dropped.

My surviving parent having died since my return from South Africa, thus diminishing the links with the old country, I went abroad again. Returning to my old profession, I accepted an appointment with a firm which I may call Messrs. Woodhouse, Grimper and Lee, contractors, who had the concession for the construction of a railway in Andalusia in the south of Spain.



## CHAPTER XII

*The Times* correspondent—Influence of *The Times*—Moorish customs in Southern Spain—Spanish love-making—Medieval customs—Anglican worship under difficulties—Curious habits—A Spanish letter—The wine bodegas—A strange story of partnership—Characteristics—Brigands—Stories—A mountain expedition—A donkey over a precipice—Narrow escape from death—Surveying difficulties.

I JOURNEYED to Spain overland, and from Paris to Madrid had the company of the then correspondent of *The Times* in the latter city. I lunched with him at one of the Puerta del Sol restaurants, he leaving immediately after to keep an appointment with the King of Spain, father of his present Majesty, while I continued my journey southward. I mention this not because it happened to be my closest association with a real king, but to illustrate what an influence, at that period, *The Times* had in European politics. It used to be said, a few generations ago, that the European Powers consisted of England, France, Prussia, Austria, Russia, and Baring Brothers, the great bankers, the latter standing for the money, without which the bayonets of the others could do little. At the time I speak of, *The Times* might have been added to the list, for public opinion had begun to have some considerable share in foreign politics, and *The Thunderer*, as *The Times* was called, represented that opinion not only in England, but, to a considerable extent, abroad. It was the time of the great Blowitz, the Paris correspondent of *The Times*, whose lightest word might

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harrow up the diplomatic soul of Europe, and make statesmen's hair to stand on end.

Spain is, in many respects, the most interesting country in Europe, chiefly on account of its backwardness in civilization. It is intensely conservative, retaining far more than any European State the customs and manners of centuries ago. We all try to realize in the vivid pages of Green, Froude and Macaulay, or of Pepys and Evelyn, the feelings and thoughts of those who lived in the days of the Tudors and the Stuarts, but it is generally a failure. We are too much surrounded with the things and thoughts of the present day. But going to Spain, especially to the remoter parts, as I did, we are thrown practically right into the past, and live in the midst of it.

The conservatism that gives rise to this is due to the influence of the Moors, who occupied Spain for so many centuries, and have left their unmistakable stamp upon every feature there—language, customs, buildings, dress, and upon the national character. This I was all the more able to appreciate, having lived so long among Eastern peoples previously.

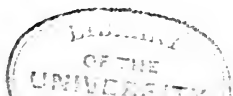
A few of these customs I may mention, prefacing my account by stating that I am speaking of the south of Spain, where the Moorish influence was greatest. The Spaniards, who are generally good riders, mount their horses on what we should call the off-side; they often sit cross-legged, wear handkerchiefs under their hats turban fashion, and summon their attendants by clapping their hands. The Spaniard's complimentary expressions, and they are many, are all tinged with Oriental extravagance. When you visit him he invariably says, "My entire house and establishment are at your Grace's disposal." If you admire his horse, he immediately rejoins, "It is yours." If you pass a

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peasant on the roadside, eating his midday meal of bread and onions, he at once asks you if you will share it with him. All this hospitality, which, of course, it would astonish the natives greatly to accept, is essentially Arabic in origin.

Spanish politeness, no doubt, comes from the same source. You address your servant as "your worship," and a lady by first saying, "I am at your worship's feet," to which she replies, "Kiss my hand," but these actions are not gone through. If you refuse alms to a beggar in the street, the phrase in which it must be done is, "Pardon me, for God's sake, your worship, my brother," which, contrary to our proverb, "Fine words butter no parsnips," appears to console him. In addressing people in Andalusia the surname is seldom used except on letters. I was always spoken to as Don Carlos, and as there were several on our English staff of the same Christian name, it was occasionally confusing. Young unmarried ladies are addressed, even by mere acquaintances, whether male or female, by their Christian names alone without prefix. A married woman is alluded to as the Señora de Don Ricardo, or Don Miguel, as the case may be. To the unmarried woman beyond a certain age, the word Doña is prefixed to her Christian name. There are, of course, now no old ladies in England, they have disappeared absolutely, but in conservative Spain there are a few; but even there the premature use of the word Doña is extremely dangerous. A safe rule is not to apply it to ladies apparently under sixty.

Women are greatly secluded in the south of Spain, as in Moorish countries. In many theatres a separate gallery is set apart for females, though they are not excluded from other parts; then the graceful mantilla which the ladies wear instead of bonnets or hats, as in



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the rest of Europe, is a survival of the *Yashmak* or hood which covers the face of the Eastern lady, only the eyes in the latter case being seen. It is curious that when the Moors left the temptation to show their faces was stronger to the Spanish woman than the conservative instinct which led them to retain intact so many of their other habits, so that the *Yashmak* became a mantilla. No unmarried woman except of the very lowest class will venture into the streets alone; but, curious to say, the company of a child, for example in the case of a nursemaid, is sufficient for propriety.

There are many of these customs applicable only to the rough times of old now past and gone, but which the persistent conservatism of the country still retains, though the object of these is gone. For instance, the better class of town houses are built round a central space or *patio*, as it is called, sometimes open to the sky, but generally glazed over, this being ornamented with fountains, statues or palms. The opening to the street is by a strong though generally ornamental iron-barred gate which in former times would not be opened to a visitor until his friendliness was ascertained. The lower windows facing the street are also barred with iron, and this leads me to a custom which is not limited to Spain, though they have a peculiar way of practising it. This is love-making. The lover is not allowed by the etiquette of the country to come inside the house of his sweetheart, even when the parents are favourable to his suit. He therefore stands every evening in the street, talking to her through the bars of the window inside of which she sits, no matter how shivery the weather might be. These *affaires de cœur* go on, of course, in all countries, but as you go along the streets of an Andalusian town in the evening, you become aware, more than in any other country, of the extent of the

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business. This is all right and very picturesque and romantic as long as love runs smooth, but another custom appears when the lady tires of her lover, or prefers another. In that case she absents herself at the usual time, and instead hangs up a pumpkin in the window, in which the Spanish Romeo recognizes his *congé*, and he either goes home philosophically or, perhaps, to another window.

I went to a show in one of the larger towns, which illustrates the Spaniard's love for horseflesh, a distinctly Arab trait. It was on the annual feast of St. Anthony, who is the patron saint of animals, a stage being erected at one side of the public square, or *plaza*, on which a number of priests stood. Nearly all the best horses and mules of the district, gaily dressed with coloured ribbons, were ridden or driven round the plaza and past the stage, where they were blessed by the priests and sprinkled with holy water in presence of large crowds. This picturesque ceremony had developed, or degenerated it might be said, even then, to a large extent into a kind of horse show, assisting the sale of the finest animals, which are thus shown off, and their paces tested.

Medieval customs are held to not less tenaciously than Moorish. The watchman still goes round at night singing a melodious cadence, consisting of an invocation to the Virgin, the hour of the night and the state of the weather, "*Ave Maria purissima—las Doce—Serenos!*" From the last word being so frequently used, the men are called "Serenos." It was said that in a southern town in which snow had not been known within the memory of man, there was a slight fall one night, and the ignorant watchman sang, after intoning the hour, "A lot of feathers are falling from the sky." The Serenos are dressed in long cloaks and slouch hats,

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carrying a lantern and an ancient halbert, just as the watchmen are equipped in staging *Much Ado About Nothing*. When a foreigner goes to Southern Spain, the singing of these Dogberrys, which is singularly melodious, keeps him awake, but he soon becomes used to it. Except for warning evil-doers that the representative of the law is approaching, and thus enabling him to escape, there seems to be no object, except pure love for antiquity, in the retention of this old custom, banished everywhere else, as far as I know.

Spanish medical practice in the early eighties had not got to the length of providing medicine bottles, and in the little town where we lived it was necessary, when going to have a doctor's prescription made up, to take a tumbler with you, into which the chemist poured the medicine required. In fact, everything in connection with the art of curing disease was equally primitive, and anything like sanitation was hardly known. It will scarcely be believed, but as late as the time I speak of Spanish doctors still bled their patients in many cases.

An amusing case of out-of-datishness, if I may coin the word, was when we imported from England a case of groceries, which had to be examined in our presence at the Custom House. A tin of washing-powder being one of the contents, it was solemnly inspected and handed round to several functionaries, none of whom could understand our explanation of the use of it. They had never heard of such a thing, and they argued and talked over it for such a long time and so suspiciously, that I believe they thought it was dynamite. It was all we could do to keep our countenances—otherwise dignity would be ruffled, and official unpleasantness and delay would surely follow.

Curious to relate, for such a non-progressive country,

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Spain was the first to introduce the postal system, but some medievalism survives with it. For instance, the postman in coming to the door, cries "Peace," to show that he is not a marauder, and in handing the letters evokes a blessing by ejaculating *Ave Maria Sanctissima!*

The Spaniards always want to put off things, so much so that *Mañana* (to-morrow) is always on their lips. Nothing can be done to-day, notwithstanding their wise proverb, *Por la calle de Mañana se llegar a la Casa de Nunca* (The street of to-morrow leads to the house of never). For any business transaction, the Andalusian official is, I believe, the slowest man in the world. The purchase of postage stamps in a small town is an example. Asked for one, the postmaster will probably first light a cigarette with a view of considering the matter, then, after some thought, will fetch a step-ladder, and search on a high shelf for an old tin box, and after some selection take out a sheet of special stamps required. After examining them closely, he finds that a pair of scissors is necessary to separate them, for there is no perforation, and this he goes to fetch in another room. After a very painstaking count of the change, you are fortunate if, in ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, you at length get your stamp.

When a person is dying, the sacrament is carried to him through the streets with a small procession, a bell being tinkled, when everyone in the street or in the houses within hearing falls on his knees. I remember being at a dinner-party given by an English wine merchant at a town in the sherry country, nearly all the guests being of the same nationality, when the little bell was heard in the street. Immediately all the servants paused in their duties and dropped on their knees by the window.

The Spanish Government is tolerant towards religions

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other than the State one, but it is difficult for them to control the ancient prejudices of the more ignorant classes ; hence, when the English residents in the town where part of my time in Spain was spent, got facilities for holding an Anglican service in a room in some barracks, we were advised by the authorities to have no music so as not to attract attention and possible disturbance. It felt rather like being an early Christian.

But this ignorance goes, as is natural, with much simple-mindedness and honesty, not found perhaps in more tolerant communities. As an instance, milk is delivered in the towns by the cows being driven round to the door of each customer, and there milked into the family jug direct ; so that what I have heard, in other lands, called "Moses" or the little prophet (profit) taken out of the water, does not come to the Spanish dairies. I also remember a custom, based on strict equity, of paddocks of oaks being hired to pig owners, the rent being based on the difference of weight of the pigs when put in to eat the acorns, and that of the same when fattened up and removed from the paddock for sale.

But as in other less primitive countries there are exceptions to this general honesty. A bootmaker, whose shop was close to our office, simple-minded himself, had an experience of one of these exceptions. A customer was trying on a ready-made pair of boots, and had a good fit on, when suddenly a man from the street entered, and picking up the customer's old boots, which were on the floor, ran away with them down the street. Their owner, acting apparently on a natural impulse, sprang up, having the new boots on, and sped after him, followed by the encouraging shouts of the shopman. His sympathy, however, gradually cooled down when he found that his customer never returned,



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and he realized that the two men were accomplices, and that he had lost his goods without having even the old ones in exchange.

An idea of the simplicity and courtesy of the Spanish lower orders may be gathered by the following literal translation of a letter received from my camp manservant :—

“ My very esteemed owner,

“ After saluting you with these bad formed letters, I wish you much happiness in company of your dear wife and family and will be glad if they are enjoying good health. Mine is good, thank God, for what you wish to command, that will I do with much pleasure and gentle good wish.

“ Mistress! If you have a mind to return to the farm house, I put in your knowledge that it is required one sieve to pass the soup and the mash and fifty thousand things that we are short of, one frying pan and pepper and flour and tea.

“ Without more, the news from here are the usual, we are all good. Without more, you will receive regards for all the family from this your servant that is so. Señor Don José Rebsiras.

“ If you wish to write me, put on the envelope, Señor Don Joseph Rebsiras, Castano, Cortijo of the Widow Magro Cualgrevillos. You will excuse the trouble.”

And with all this simplicity and relative poverty, the Spanish peasants are as happy as any I know, while those of other lands with more than twice their wages and comforts are often grumbling, and might be considered like the Latins of Horace—

“ O Fortunatos nimium sua si bona norint agricolas.”

The wine bodegas, as they are called, in the town

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already referred to, are interesting places to visit, though one sometimes is led, by the customs of the place, into indiscretions. The visitor is courteously invited to taste the various samples of wine which are lifted out of the casks by an instrument like a long-stemmed pipe, in which the bowl and stem are set at a very small angle. As there is much mixing of liquors, and more taken in small doses than the visitor is aware of, his thoughts, words, and deeds when he leaves are often not so well regulated as might be desired. Some time before some of us went through the principal one, it was said that a very high personage of that epoch had gone through, accompanied by a very high feminine personage, and the estimate of the divinity which doth usually hedge such high personages was slightly lowered when they were being conducted to their carriage to depart.

But it is time to return to my story among these scenes. And first might be mentioned the curious circumstances which brought together the two chief members of my employer's firm. This story, related to me by one of them, illustrates from what small causes important results may spring. Woodhouse was a prominent railway contractor, and was travelling in Hungary in a train in which, as befitting his important position, he had a reserved compartment. The rest of the train was full to the doors, there being hardly even standing room, owing to some local fête further on.

The train stopped at a small country station where Grimper, then unknown to Woodhouse, endeavoured to occupy one of the only vacant places in the engaged compartment. Woodhouse strongly protested, but Grimper, with apologies, insisted on his right to enter, there being no other room and his business brooking no delay. The stationmaster was called, but the train was

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late, and the driver was whistling impatiently, so the train moved off with Grimper in possession. The language of the pair became rapidly massive and explosive in character, but the carriage roof was strong and nothing could be done. Throwing the intruder out of the window was out of the question, for apart from legal consequences and the loss of dignity to the great man, the other was much the greater of the two physically. So, like the muttering and the gloom of a retreating storm, each sat in his far-off corner growling and glaring at each other. Suddenly came a severe jolt, nearly knocking them off their seats. Involuntarily Grimper cried out, "What a shocking bad slack!" Now *slack*, it may be explained, means in the railway engineer's technical language, a depression in the rails caused by the careless maintenance of the level of the line by the men who are constantly employed to keep it in order. "Awful," said the other. "But you must be an engineer." "I am, indeed," was the reply. "And are you doing any business about here?" And so on and so forth, until peace was entirely restored in talking about their business. Not only this, but Grimper being an attractive personality, the older man quite took to him during the rest of the long journey, and asked him to dinner to meet his daughter whom he was about to join at an hotel at their common destination. This invitation was accepted, the young people met, and so on and so forth, until some months after Grimper became Woodhouse's son-in-law, and subsequently his partner. Thus the former, from being an insignificant atom in a nebula of the engineering firmament, became a star of, at least, the third or fourth magnitude, in sharing a large and lucrative business. And all because a careless workman had failed to put a shovelful or two of gravel into a hole.

The first two things to be done in our new work were

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to learn the language and to procure good saddle horses. As to the first, our staff were chiefly English with some French and Spanish assistants. Spanish is not difficult to learn, but the Andalusian idiom varies much from the pure Castilian, and consequently the dictionary often proved of little avail. Added to this, our dealings at first, both in business and domestically, were chiefly with the lower class, so that we acquired expressions and pronunciation which, when meeting the better class, we had to live down.

As the route of the proposed railway had to be fixed, the formation of survey parties was the first work, and as interpreter and foreman over the men under my directions I had a Frenchman, until able to do without him. Having also a Frenchman among our superior staff, I found great difficulty in separating the two languages. Domestically the difficulty was greater, and there being no interpreter and absolute ignorance of each other's language, in addition to which circumstance the servants' was a patois, communication was only possible by signs. For instance, in ordering a shoulder of mutton, through the cook, it was necessary to point to your shoulder and to imitate the baaing of a sheep.

The Spanish cookery is the worst in Europe, except possibly the English *plain* variety. There is a proverb that God sends meat and the devil sends cooks. I think a special contingent of the latter were dispatched to Spain. These and other troubles, however, we soon got over in the flat we had rented, which, by the way, reminds me of a curious custom, which is that, in Spain, the rent of houses and flats is fixed at so much per day: for example, ours was, I think, 12 *reales*, or 2s. 6d. An Englishman would value a house by the rent paid for it for a year, but this would give no idea to a Spaniard, who

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would have to divide the amount by 365 to arrive at a comprehension of it.

The necessity for good riding horses and baggage mules and donkeys was specially great, as in Southern Spain there were, at that time, practically no roads. Leaving a village or even a town, generally walled round as in the Middle Ages, there being no suburbs, the country would be reached at once, and to travel to the next town—except, of course, where there was already a railway—it was necessary to take to the saddle and follow a bridle path. The baggage would follow slung across the backs of mules or donkeys, and children would be loaded up also in this latter fashion in panniers or baskets, one on each side. I call to mind one journey of this kind, where two children, one older and therefore heavier than the other, were so arranged. As the mule had to be driven with its lop-sided cargo, till some place was reached where stones were available to adjust the balance, one little one, who kept heeling over, was heard to say in plaintive tones, “Oh, Mammy! I wish we was twins.”

While at the survey work it was necessary to lodge in *ventas* (country inns), *cortijos* (farm-houses) or in tents. Once, I had the loan from the owner of a fine country mansion which was empty, owing to the fact that the country was infested with brigands, and he was afraid that he should be carried away for ransom if he occupied it. I was safe because, I suppose, they did not think that I was important enough to be worth a ransom good enough for them. Obscurity is occasionally an advantage.

The officials are said to be sometimes in league with these picturesque ruffians, and a short time before I went to the district, an instance occurred. A quantity of Government money was being sent by train to a

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certain town. Near it, the brigands had placed a tree across the rails bringing the train to a standstill, and proceeded to seize the plunder. But the authorities had been warned, and a guard of soldiers who accompanied the train dispersed the robbers, and shot a number. When the bodies of the latter were picked up, one of them was found to be that of the mayor of the town. After all, robbery of Government money is not confined to Spain, and brigandage is no worse than swindling in the City. In fact, it is rather better, as the amount involved is not generally so great, and there is no pretence of honesty about it.

There is a great deal of smuggling on the coast. The mayors of two adjoining seaports were deeply "in the swim," as it is called. The one pretended to expect a raid by a band of smugglers, and asked the other, officially, to lend him his *carbineros* (coastguards). While these were absent, the mayor of the undefended town connived at landing a quantity of goods without duty being paid, the profit being divided between the two officials.

There is no engineering work perhaps so fascinating as fixing, in mountainous country, the route of a railway, so as to get the maximum of advantage in avoiding steep inclines and sharp curves, which are such subsequent impediments to the economical working of the line, and the minimum of cost in tunnels, viaducts, etc. Of this we had plenty, and to test a new route which had been suggested a large exploring party went out to find the best passage across the precipitous Sierras which intervened between the towns that the railway was to connect.

We were to spend about ten days, and we carried no tents, sleeping in the open at night, one of us being on watch turn about for four hours each, to give the

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alarm in case of brigands turning up, and to see after the security of the horses and baggage animals. A roaring wood fire was made, maintained by the watcher, and the rest of us slept with our feet towards the fire, radiating out like the spokes of a wheel. We lay on our waterproofs, but, except for the last night, we had no rain.

Needless to say we had some adventures. One was the loss of one of our pack donkeys with his load, some of it grocery, spirits, etc. Many of the mountain paths are cut out of the side of the rock, with only room for the animal and one half of his load, the other half protruding more or less over the edge of the precipice. It is very easy to see that should the inner pack be wider than usual, or that there be a protuberance of rock or tree on the inside, contact with it may easily send the beast over. Something of this sort happened, and over the poor animal went to his destruction. We could only reflect that it was not the first ass who was undone through whisky. To avoid such catastrophes, and to give himself room, the sagacious mule in these places generally walks on the very verge of the path, about six or nine inches from the edge, and as he is so accustomed by habit to this, he will also do it without a load, or when ridden, as mules often are, so that the rider's outside leg overhangs the often dizzy height, and the feeling is very uncomfortable. Trying to induce the beast to travel further in is hopeless, and, in fact, it is really safer to leave the surefooted animal to his own sweet and very decided will. I do not know what would happen if we had met a similar party coming the other way. We did not, and of course such a condition of the path did not occur often.

In all these excursions only the best riding is safe, and the southern Spaniards are exceptionally good

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horsemen. The horses clamber up or slide down precipitous paths which no rider would think of attempting to negotiate in any other part of the world. He simply lets the rein loose, leaving the untrammelled and dexterous animal to his own devices, and he clings on by his knees, with hands grasping the mane if necessary, when a very steep ascent is made, so as to prevent himself going over the stern. To try and guide the horse would be fatal—he knows best what to do. The native saddles, owing probably to these contingencies, have great peaks in front and behind, and stirrups like coal-scuttles ; but we generally used English saddlery.

It was due, no doubt, to this great dexterity in our horseflesh that our lives were saved in the adventure which I am about to relate. We had halted for lunch, sending other baggage forward. There was a strong wind, and to get shelter from it a spot was selected protected by some high rocks and thick bushes, between which and the edge of the precipice looking down into a deep *garganta* (gorge) there was just room for ourselves and our tethered horses. We had just comfortably settled down when a peculiar roaring noise was heard above that of the wind, but we thought nothing of it till somebody remarked that he thought the day, which had been rather cold, was getting warmer. The noise rapidly increased, and, the horses getting restless, we began to realize that not only was there a bush or prairie fire, but it was close upon us ; and it is almost incredible with what speed this travels. There was on one side the fierce fire roaring on to us, and the precipice on the other. It just happened, owing to the direction of the wind, that the fire was nearer to us, facing the gorge, on the left than on the right ; hence the only escape was in the latter direction, where the conflagration, approaching at an angle, would not reach the edge of the cliff so



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quickly as to our left. To loosen the horses and mount with great difficulty was the work of a moment or two—with difficulty, for the animals, smelling the fire, were almost ungovernable from fear. Full speed, as far as it was possible, along the edge of the precipice through rocks, trees, and all sorts of obstructions, was our only chance. The least delay or a fall would have been fatal, the imminence was so great. In a few minutes, however, we gained more open ground, and we were saved. This notable trip came a day or two after to an end with no disaster beyond the poor donkey's untimely fate.

But the general route, when selected by means of these interesting explorations, had to be surveyed in detail, and the difficulties in carrying out field work of this kind with delicate surveying instruments were often great indeed. The line as proposed would sometimes follow along the side of an almost inaccessible precipice, where in places the engineer, in order to maintain his position, had to be tied on to a tree-stump while taking observations, or had to place a man crouching at a lower level so that his back might form a footstool while a sight through the instrument was being taken.

## CHAPTER XIII

Cadiz—A bull-fight—Spanish humour—Stories—Bullets whistling about my head—Escape from drowning—A philosopher—A revolt—Seville—Holy Week—The Giralda—Moorish palaces—Queen Isabella II—An extraordinary forewarning of death—Andalusian scenery—Decline of Spain—Departure.

**A**FTER many months of hard work a holiday followed, which was spent in that white wonder of the world—

“Fair Cadiz, rising o’er the dark blue sea!”

in which blue water did we bathe deliciously under the summer sun. In lovely Cadiz—the bombardment of which by Drake, called by him the singeing of the King of Spain’s whiskers, seems almost to have been a sacrilege—we had a brief *descanso*, as the Spaniards call it. It was at Cadiz that I saw my first bull-fight, and indeed my last, for that which I saw subsequently at Lisbon, being forewarned as to its character, could hardly be called more than a sham-fight.

Well do I remember that sunny Sunday afternoon, the day *par excellence* for the display, when I wended my way to the great oval ring to which the highly coloured posters led me. It was something like those uncovered arenas or amphitheatres of which the ruins may be seen in Rome and Pompeii. On one side, centred by the Alcalde’s box, were the seats row above row on the shady side occupied by the rank and fashion of the town, the ladies with the white mantilla which Spanish custom has decreed shall be worn at bull-fights only, in

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contradistinction to the usual black. Ladies are not only not ashamed to be seen at these cruel shows, but throng to them with as great avidity as Englishwomen go to a cricket or polo match. I well remember how the dark eyes of one of these señoras glittered with excitement as she described to me, and induced me to see for myself, the wild charge of the bull and the dexterous movements of the *toreros*.

Opposite the gentlefolk, right in the sun, and cheaper on that account, were the seats for the many, with their wives and children. The Spaniards are not generally so demonstrative as their continental neighbours, but all the exuberance they possess is reserved for and set free at the *Corrida de Toros*. The bull-fight begins by the entry of all the *toreros* in the gorgeous traditional costumes of the ring, splendid specimens of active and muscular humanity. This is preceded by their confessions to a priest, in view of a possible "regrettable incident." A procession round the arena follows, during which salutation is made to the *Alcalde*, who thereupon throws down to them the key of the cell in which the bull has been confined the previous night. This ceremony is said to be a survival in Spain of the Roman occupation when, in the gladiatorial combats, the competitors came forward and, addressing the throned Emperor or his deputy, said, "*Ave Cæsar! Morituri te salutant!*"

After this preliminary all the *toreros* retire, except the *picadores* and the *chulos*, being those who take part in the first part of the three sections into which each bull-fight is divided. The *picadores*, armed with long lances, are mounted on broken-down horses, and the most cruel part of the proceedings is in connection with these. The lance being used by the right hand, the bull is naturally attacked from that side, and, as it would

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be otherwise impossible to induce the horses to approach a ferocious bull, their right eyes are blindfolded, so that they rush unconsciously on to their fate. The *chulos* are on foot and unarmed. They have only a red scarf or cloak, by which, carried on the arm, they constantly divert the attention of the bull when the *picadores* are hard-pressed.

The bull is not of the familiar English type, heavy-bodied and short-horned, but of a much more active build, and with long and dangerous-looking horns. He is driven in from the country the day before the fight, and is kept in a completely dark cell until liberated for it. Half blinded by the unaccustomed glare and maddened by the shouts of the excited crowd, he lashes his tail and charges at full speed the first assailant that meets his eye. If the latter be a *chulo*, his wonderful agility enables him generally to escape ; but if a *picador*, the onset of the bull is so violent that usually horse and man go down, the horse probably mortally injured. Quick as lightning the agile *chulos* divert the bull's attention from his second charge, and a series of wonderful manœuvres follows. Hair-breadth escapes succeed with great rapidity, attack and defence alternating according to the vigour and temper of the bull, and if these are conspicuous, horse after horse goes down with varying injuries, occasionally, but not often, the man being also hurt. The barrier round the ring dividing the arena from the spectators is double, there being a space of four or five feet between the two fences composing it, and when very hard pressed the *chulo*, if near enough, springs over into this space. On the occasion of my visit, not only this occurred, but the bull, an unusually light and active one, followed over, and the nearer spectators, who were only separated from the enraged beast by a fence similar to that over which

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he had already sprung, fell back on their supports, as friendly cables say when a military force is utterly routed. Danger from drowning, fire, and digestion by wild beasts has been my occasional lot, and though several feet above injury on this occasion, I have rarely felt more excitement than during the first part of this *corrida*.

At a signal from the Alcalde, the first phase is ended, and the men and surviving horses retire, this movement being often greatly accelerated by the close attention of the bull. Next the *banderilleros* appear. These are on foot and are armed with a number of *banderillos* or short-barbed javelins, decorated at the non-business end with many-coloured streamers of ribbon. The bull, wounded by the spears, and panting with excitement, stares at them as suspiciously as an Englishman does at another to whom he has not been introduced. One of the party faces the animal, and holds his weapon aloft, challenging him to come on, and generally on he comes accordingly, with a vengeance. Lightly springing aside, the *torero* plunges one of his javelins in the bull's shoulders, and enraged at his failure, the infuriated animal turns round to see another tormentor waiting for him in another direction, when he charges again and again.

Not infrequently, the attack of the bull is so violent that the *banderillero* cannot lodge his dart, and has enough to do to escape from instant death. Maddened by pain and loss of blood, the bull frequently leaps from all fours high into the air, and charges blindly into space, while the shouts of the spectators, who throw their hats into the arena in token of applause when any specially dexterous feat is performed, drive him to frenzy. Great indeed would be the loss of human life in the first two parts, were it not for the ease with which, as a rule, the bull's attention is diverted from the attack on one man

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to that on another, and the cool and trained way in which this is done must be seen to be realized. An untrained man entering the arena at this time would meet his fate without delay.

In the third and last part, when, it must be remembered, the bull's energy is a good deal exhausted, the *matador* enters alone, armed with a sharp, straight rapier and carrying a scarlet cloak on his arm. There are many exciting phases in this part of the fight, the loss of energy in the beast being more or less matched by the reduction in number of his assailants to one. Indeed, the flourishing of the scarlet cloak is often needed to arouse the bull to his full fighting form. Finally, watching his opportunity, the *matador* plunges his sword up to the hilt between the animal's shoulders, and the valiant beast, overcome by numbers and skill, after a few ineffectual struggles, sinks dead to the ground.

Teams of gaily dressed mules are now driven in to drag away the dead horses and bull, and the arena is swept for the next fight. Byron mildly refers to this horrible carnage as—

“Such the ungentle sport that oft invites  
The Spanish maid and cheers the Spanish swain.”

Five or six fights and the deaths of as many bulls and of many more horses occupy an afternoon ; but the men seldom suffer, owing to their splendid skill. On the occasion of my visit only one man was slightly wounded. Horrible cruelty, no doubt, this is to modern minds, but my reading of history and my experience have taught me that cruelty, and insensibility to pain and to value of life, are quite distinct things, the latter varying much more than the former with the refinement which civilization brings. For example, the prayers and devotional books of early Christianity, some of the former still

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adorning our services, are full of loving-kindness and altruism, yet the history of Hypatia and others shows how these early Christians tore each other to pieces with very little scruple. There is no reason to suppose that the people of Shakespeare's time were less affectionate and good-hearted than we are; in fact, his and others' plays show they were quite our equals in these respects, yet there is no doubt that the wholesale slaughter in some of his plays, then evidently expected and enjoyed, is only tolerated now because they are Shakespeare's. No modern author dare introduce such carnage. Our own more immediate ancestors were, no doubt, just as kindly natured as their descendants of to-day, yet they freely hanged their criminals for small offences, or put them in the pillory.

I do not defend the bull-fight, but its existence in Spain is to be explained by the insensibility to pain, which is a necessary accompaniment of their backward civilization, rather than by want of kind-heartedness, a quality of which I know by experience they possess as much as any other people. Sensitiveness is a consequence of advanced civilization, and I believe the time will come when we shall commiserate slight bodily injuries at which we now laugh, and shall probably shudder at the cutting of a cabbage.

The Portuguese bull-fight, one of which I saw later at Lisbon, is a very different affair, no loss of life occurring, so it is utterly contemptible from the Spaniard's point of view, owing to there being no danger. The bull's horns are padded, and a fall being the worst accident, the best horses are used. The dresses also are quite different, being those of the picturesque mid-eighteenth century period. The dexterity displayed, however, is very conspicuous, and there is much opportunity for skilful and graceful horsemanship.

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In connection with bull-fighting, I may relate here an incident. Among my surveying staff I had a man of very eccentric habits who had been a soldier servant to a Spanish officer in garrison in one of the Spanish colonies. Not being able to enjoy the real thing, the officers got up an amateur bull-fight in which my man Barca, totally untrained for the function, was to be one of the performers. The bull quickly gave him, in Lowell's poetic language, a heavenly lift, but he came down on the top of his head, and ever after his actions were strange and unaccountable, especially when cattle were near, as they often were in our operations. After his experience, one would have thought that when Barca saw anything like a bull or cow coming, he would suddenly realize that he had forgotten something at home. But no. There was all the difficulty imaginable among his mates to prevent him going straight for the animal. Such was the peculiar disarrangement of his brain which the adventure had caused.

The Cadiz visit came to an end all too soon, and the work had to be resumed. The Spanish people have a certain grave humour, instanced by that great work, *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha*, to give it its full title. But this must be read in the original to appreciate its perfect savour, not an easy task, the language being so archaic. It is the frequent recitation of the Bible that has prevented the great change in English which has occurred in the French and Spanish languages since the sixteenth century, a change which has practically barred the older literatures of those countries to readers of the present day.

My Spanish assistant, Angel Perez, was full of this divine gift, as shown by the following story he told me. Don Angel was a musician, and had formerly played in the orchestra of one of the provincial theatres, the con-



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ductor of which was greatly disliked by the instrumentalists. He was bald and wore a wig, and Don Angel during an afternoon preceding an evening performance, attached a fine silk thread to the curtain pole with the other end of the thread reaching to the conductor's seat, a fish-hook being attached to it. When the orchestra assembled he managed, by pretending to look for some music over the conductor's shoulder, to hook the string on to the wig. When the overture concluded with a great clash of instruments, the curtain went slowly up and with it the wig, leaving exposed the bare cranium of the unfortunate *maestro*, and creating quite a *furore* of amused applause and cries of *Otra vez!* (encore), which so disgusted him that he took to his bed for weeks with a severe illness.

There is a sort of familiarity in the Spanish provincial audiences between them and the actors and musicians which I have not known elsewhere, the former shouting their opinions freely. On one occasion the reverse happened. I heard a singer whose voice was not equal to a certain very high note, not even attempting it, and who addressed the conductor in the middle of the song, saying quite simply, "No puede, señor" (I cannot do it, sir), which was evidently an *ad misericordiam* appeal to the forbearance of the audience as well.

Don Angel's sister was a nun in a convent near Madrid, about which he told a queer story. In Philip IV's time there was at this retreat a beautiful nun who had been the object of the King's attentions previous to her taking the veil. Here he tried to follow her; and to avoid his importunities she was reported to be ill, and subsequently to have died. A mock funeral was gone through, and the King, in his great sorrow, ordered Masses to be said for her soul and a bell to be rung periodically. The nun, however, lived to a green old

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age, hearing every year during her life her own death bell, which Don Angel informed me was still periodically tolled.

We went to a private entertainment to see the graceful dances characteristic of Andalusia, the bolero, fandango, and others with castanets, and the management of the fan, the movements of which are a distinct language. For instance, it is said that a *señorita* can convey a message such as "Come to my window to-morrow night at eight ; mother is away," by a few dexterous twists of the wrist and opening and shutting of the fan, but this may be an exaggeration. Asked if this fan language was easy to learn, the reply of one of the dancers was a simple and expressive "*Segun*" (according to)—that is to say, it depended on the learner, which was most true.

Ignorance of a language leads sometimes to queer results. A young English girl came on a visit to one of our party, and an excursion to an old abbey being arranged we all rode there. A Spanish cavalry officer whose barracks adjoined the building was one of the party, and he and the fair visitor rode together, neither of them knowing the other's language. Some one had told the latter it was a polite thing to say occasionally, "*Tiene usted una Novia, Señor?*" of which, of course, she knew not the meaning, which is "Have you a sweetheart?" And she kept going at the embarrassed young man with the repetition of this searching question till he was glad to find his horse so restive that he felt obliged to procure for her another cavalier who understood French or English, in which she was at home.

Arrived at the barracks, we were initiated into the rough, if hospitable, ways of a Spanish cavalry mess. Here we were regaled with slices of raw bacon and

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sherry, the latter being served in a single wineglass, which was refilled and passed round from one to another. The manœuvres of those who could not stomach the raw meat, in order to get rid of it without observation, were curious. And the privates' meal which we saw going on in the barrack-yard was in the same rough style. A *puchero* or large earthen bowl of soup was placed on the ground, and each soldier came up in turn and dipped his tin can into it. The marching of the soldiers can hardly be so called. It was like, except for the very untidy uniform, the progress of a hooligan football crowd.

In Southern Spain the women of even a superior class are often very imperfectly educated, or, at all events, were so at the time of which I speak. We were coming from a musical church service with the sisters of the cavalry officer just referred to, a lieutenant in the Spanish Navy being another brother, when the music being discussed, none of the *señoritas* seemed ever to have heard of the names of Beethoven, Mozart or Rossini.

But to return to adventures by flood and field. One of a mounted party inspecting the country, I was riding a very fresh horse, and thought that I should calm him by giving him his head, so went forward at speed, leaving the rest. Just after, I heard some curious whistling noises about my head, but being busy with my plunging animal I took no notice. When he was nearly pumped I drew rein and went leisurely on to our destination for the night, ordering the necessary accommodation at the *venta*, not, of course, expecting my companions for half an hour or so. However, many hours elapsed before they came and told their story. Just as I went forward and left them, Grimper's horse fell into one of those deep crevices which a previous

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heavy rain had scoured out in the path, and sticking fast, could not be extricated without much help. They wanted all the assistance they could get, and not being able, against a strong wind, to attract my attention otherwise, they drew their pistols, with which they were always armed, and fired after me, aiming so as just to clear me, in order that I should hear the bullets whistling, if not the reports. But, as I have said, to no purpose. By getting help from a farm-house, however, the horse was at length released without serious damage. I blessed my stars that in this case my friends were good shots ; otherwise they might have hit me.

A later incident might have ended the changes and chances of my varied career through my own fault. Coming home one day from a surveying expedition with some men and mules, we came to a torrent swelled with recent heavy rains and running and foaming with great violence. The men tried to dissuade me from riding across, thinking that the force of the torrent would carry horse and rider away, when we might be drowned in the deeper waters lower down. But having confidence in myself and my horse, I determined to cross. However, chiefly to satisfy them, I allowed them, at the suggestion of Manuel, my faithful foreman, to fasten a long light rope round my waist, they holding the other end, so that if, by any chance, the horse were carried away, they might pull me back ashore. I told them to be sure to let go when they were certain that I was through the deep and rapid part, as the rope was not long enough to reach entirely across the water.

But the best-laid schemes gang aft agley, and so with this. Great boulders here and there obstructed the rush of the mountain torrent, making it all the more violent between them. The bottom was rocky and uneven and full of dangerous holes, while the turbid

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state of the water gave us no chance of seeing to what footing the next step would lead us. Now we were almost swimming in deep pools, and again trying to make head, almost capsized by the terrible pressure of torrential water. Stumbling and struggling, my gallant horse, Pompey, put his whole strength to his work, but for a moment or two it was a case of touch and go, and I would have felt grateful, if I had had room in my mind for any such sentiment at such a crisis, to the faithful Manuel for his thought of tying me to the shore.

A single step into a hole or a stumble would have decided the contest between us and the flood in its favour ; but fortunately it was not to be, and we were just getting into rather quieter and shallower water, but still somewhat tumultuous, when I felt the rope tightening and tending to pull me over the horse's tail. Shouting to the men to let go the rope was not of much use with the roaring waters between us, but trying to get Pompey round to ease the strain on the rope, I soon saw that the men had let go. A knot, however, at the end of the rope, which had not been observed, had caught between two rocks, and there was a sort of pull-devil-pull-baker between me, held by the rope, and Pompey, who, of course, could not understand the situation, striving to get ashore. In the struggle the rope, which was a thin one, got round his neck as he turned, and in endeavouring to disengage it, while the horse was throwing his head about, the rope got round one of my fingers, giving it a severe wrench. There was nothing for it now but to dismount in the water and to cut the rope with my pocket-knife, setting us free. The men, who were not so well mounted, followed later, when the water had subsided. It was not until the next day, when my finger began to get very painful, that I rode

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into Gibraltar to see a doctor, who pronounced it broken, so I was let off easily from a great danger.

The faithful Manuel was a philosopher, much given to what we should call chaff. He had learned a few words of English, and on one occasion we passed some peasants at work whom he addressed: "Can you spik Ingliss?" Of course, receiving the reply: "*No comprende, Senor.*" "*Pobrecitos!*" cried Manuel, in pitying tones, an almost untranslateable epithet, implying under the circumstances, "What a miserable poor lot of wretches not to understand the only language worth speaking in the world," only a word or two of which, however, he could manage for himself. It was meant more, no doubt, for us, in a sarcastic sense, than for those to whom he spoke. By the way, the lowest class of Spaniards address each other as "*Señor.*" The ordinary men of Manuel's class get only about 1s. 8d. a day, living principally on bread and onions, and generally they are as happy as the day is long. There was, however, some scarcity even of this poor fare at one season, and an Anarchical Society called the *Mano Negra* incited a sort of attempt at a revolt, when, close by where we lived, a baker's shop had to be guarded by cavalry.

An Easter holiday was spent in Seville, principally to see the religious processions of Holy Week, of world-wide celebrity. These consist principally of a great number of heavy platforms passing along the streets, supported beneath by men partly concealed by hanging draperies. On top of these are representations in carved wood of scenes of the Passion, Gethsemane, the Crucifixion, etc., some of the figures being of great antiquity and many clothed, especially that of the Virgin, with very costly embroidered robes, one of which is said to be worth £2000. The streets are

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very narrow, so that there is not much room for the crowd, who are a good deal crushed against the walls, while women from the upper stories throw down roses, and sing hymns to the Virgin. Penitents in white conical caps, and Roman centurions and lictors march in front and rear. The great cathedral is the scene, of course, of much of the ceremonial, which is probably the most magnificent display of Christian ritual known.

The site of the church was originally that of a temple of Astarte, subsequently during the Moorish occupation that of a Mosque, traces of the latter being found still in the ancient Gothic building now standing, though some of this has fallen since the date of my visit. More than any other of the many great churches I have seen before and since, the interior of Seville Cathedral gives an impression of magnificent gloom, produced by its great height and its few richly coloured windows, and no doubt also owing to the entry of the spectators from the sunny streets of the South, so often absent from the Northern Gothic church surroundings. The idea also that the worshipper stands on ground consecrated to the adoration of the Supreme Being under different conceptions for over nineteen centuries adds much to the solemnity and interest, not only of the hallowed site itself, but of the grand ceremonials still held within its walls. This church is unique in one of its services, namely, the dance before the High Altar, which takes place two or three times a year. Dancing formed a feature of Divine worship among the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and even among the Early Christians. At Seville the ceremonial is gone through by boys dressed in the costumes of the early seventeenth century, but its origin is much older. Though it is called the dance of the *seises*, or sixes, the number of the boys taking part

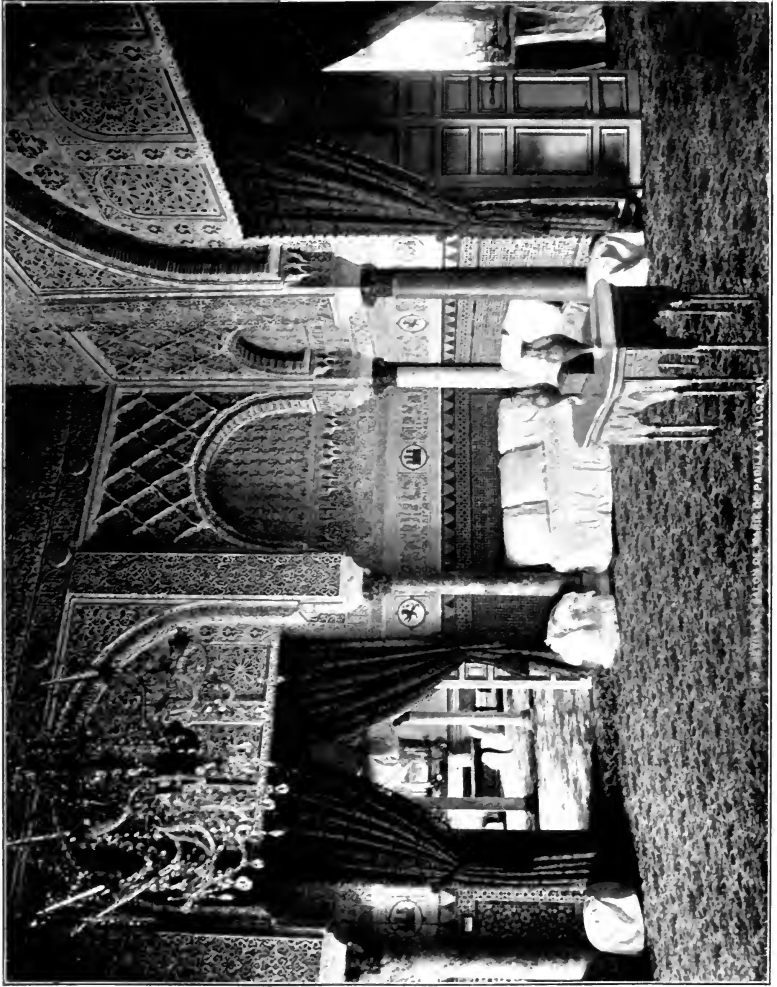
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in it is now much greater. The prevailing colours in the dresses are blue and red, half of each. The music is in a minor key, and the movement of the boys is slow and solemn, and is accompanied by the castanets. A graphic description, with the music, of this strange ceremonial was given in *The Wide World Magazine* of December, 1899, by Mr. Herbert Vivian.

On Good Friday, in Seville, all the churches from noon to three in the afternoon are kept in complete darkness, except for the faint glimmer of the light before the High Altar, which is totally insufficient to dispel the gloom. Going into one of these churches to hear the preaching, which goes on continuously for the three hours, you are apt to stumble over some kneeling worshipper in the dark. Outside, the solemnity of the day is accentuated by no vehicles being allowed in the streets, no bells being rung, everybody appearing in mourning, and the troops carrying their arms reversed, as at a funeral. All flags also are half-masted. Nowhere, not even in Rome itself, is the universal grief of Christendom more intensely typified.

Close by the cathedral and rising high above it is the ancient Moorish tower of the *Giralda*, to the top of which, though so lofty, a mule can be ridden. This is by means of a spiral incline within its walls. On the top, added by the Christians after the expulsion of the Moors, is a gigantic figure of Faith; but curious to state, notwithstanding the virtue it is supposed to represent, it forms a weathercock, shifting with every gust of wind. The medieval ecclesiastics had a humorous vein, which often expressed itself in building, and it is possible that this figure was meant to show sarcastically the state of those unstable persons who are described in Holy Writ as being affected by





A ROOM IN THE ALCAZAR, SEVILLE



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every wind of doctrine. Another instance of this I remember in Paris, where the ancient pulpit in the church of St. Etienne du Mont was supported by a carved figure of Samson wielding the jawbone of an ass. Surely this could not have been done by any monkish architect without some thought of the delivery of sermons by his brother ecclesiastics and those who were to succeed him.

The magnificent Moorish interiors of the Alcazar were duly visited, a source of real artistic enjoyment; but this is not a guide-book, so I must refrain. Here in Seville I saw the then Dowager Queen Isabella of Spain walking with a small escort in the *Delicias*, the fashionable promenade of the city. This notable lady, now dead, who had been celebrated in early Victorian times as a great beauty and the central personage of many European political events of the day, was not at all distinguished in appearance in her old age. In fact, she was dowdy.

Not long after this Easter diversion, a gloom was cast over our party by the death of our popular chief, Grimper, which I mention specially because it occurred under circumstances which seem to have been a sort of foreboding of the event. He was a man of stalwart proportions and great energy, but had been suffering from the effects of blood poisoning, following a kick from a restive horse. He took very little notice of his ailments, however, and no one imagined, up to the day of his sudden death, that there was much the matter with him. The house where he lived, and in which the office work of the contract was carried on in the little wine-making town, was, like most others there, built in the Moorish fashion, with a *patio* or courtyard in the middle, the dwelling rooms being all around, sometimes, as in this case, in several stories. The patio, which had a glass roof, was used as an office.

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The chief had a valet, Miguel, who had a most gloomy aspect and disposition, always making the worst of things. One morning Grimper, not feeling very well, had remained in bed for breakfast, and wishing to give some instruction sent for me from the patio underneath. Going into the room, he asked me how he looked, for, he said, "Miguel has been telling me that I look wretched, so much so, that I told him that he might as well go away and order my coffin at once, if he had nothing more cheerful to say." I assured him, truthfully, that I could not see much the matter with him, so that, after going through the business, he jokingly called out, as I went downstairs, "I say, old fellow, do you see that coffin coming up?" Curious to relate, his coffin did come up that very day. I had hardly settled to my work on returning to the office, when I was called suddenly upstairs again to help, as pillows and restoratives had to be fetched for the dying Grimper, who, after a struggle and a whispered reference to his wife and children away in England, passed away that same forenoon. Spanish law requires burial within twenty-four hours, hence the coffin appeared the same day.

The work on which we were engaged was not affected by the death of Grimper, whose successor in the local management of the contract was soon appointed; but shortly after, the whole enterprise fell through on account of some financial failure. The line, which was partially made, was completed some years after with some variation in its route by other concessionaires, but our party was broken up and the works were stopped.

It was a great regret to leave Spain, and especially the lovely scenery of Andalusia with its rugged sierras and its soft valleys clothed with the rhododendron and its blushing flowers, and the deep green myrtle, bathed in

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almost continuous sunshine. The outdoor life among such surroundings was something worth living. Also, I liked the people, especially those of the so-called lower class—simple, frugal, kindly, and the most temperate in their habits of the many races I have come across. Curious it is that in the wine-making countries the most sobriety prevails. *Val de peñas*, a sound wine, is plentiful and cheap, but though we used to see large numbers of the peasantry with mules carrying loads of grapes across their backs into the *bodegas*, I do not remember any case of drunkenness among those on their return to the *Campo*.

Sad it is to see the falling-off in the glory of Spain. In the days of Ferdinand and Isabella and down to those of Philip II she colonized the great new world, contended on equal terms with France, overawed Holland, and was almost on the eve of the conquest of England. Now she is of no account in the councils of Europe, and with difficulty maintains her place as a third-rate power. During the early part of the century just passed, she was nearly the cause of European war over the question of the beautiful queen whom, in her old age, I saw at Seville ; and later, the succession to the throne of Spain was the nominal cause of the great Franco-German struggle of 1870, but she had no voice herself in either question. It has been stated that her intolerant religious system has been the cause of Spain's decline, but she was never so great as when she was at the height of her intolerance. Others say, and I have heard this theory put forward by Spaniards themselves, that all the most energetic blood of the country went out of it to seek their fortunes in the New World three hundred years ago, leaving behind them the worst of the race. If this were true, we should find in the South American republics of to-day the worthy successors of the men who fought

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Drake and Raleigh, but are they so? Moreover, the same argument should be justified by a declining England, which has also been bled by her colonies, though in more recent times.

The English staff departed in various directions, we leaving in a small steamer bound for London from Cadiz, to which the ever faithful and almost weeping Manuel journeyed, at his own expense, to see us off. We left sadly, looking back, like Lot's wife, on the receding scenes of many a pleasant social time, and wished that our farewell to dear old Spain was *hasta luego* (au revoir), instead of, as it had to be, *Con Dios* (good-bye).

Some time ago, two friends of mine met after a separation of over twenty years, and recalling the old days, one said: "Do you remember that dinner we had one summer's evening at the 'Star and Garter,' looking down on the richly wooded Thames below?" "Ah! yes," said the other, "and that saddle of mutton we had! Do you know, I have often regretted since that I did not have a second helping." Well, this little talk illustrates what we felt about Spain. We could have so much enjoyed another slice.

## CHAPTER XIV

Cape St. Vincent—Cintra—Lisbon—The Irish cabman—Vigo—Bay of Biscay—English scenery—A symposium—Clerical eccentricities and anecdotes.

**A** GAIN we were adrift on the world, bound for the centre of most engineering possibilities—London. The first excitement of the voyage was passing quite close under the high beetling promontory of Cape St. Vincent, standing with its brown deeply scored cliffs over the ever moaning surge of the blue Atlantic. A straggling and lonely convent crowns the summit far away from any other habitation, and, to the surprise of our few passengers, the sound of the deep whistle of our steamer brought forth from one of the convent windows a white arm and handkerchief, which was waved in friendly salute while we passed. This little interchange of courtesies, our skipper explained, took place at every one of the occasions when, during daylight, he passed on his regular voyages between the Spanish ports and London. He had never seen close the fair recluse, whom he called his Spanish sweetheart. Next we steamed into the Tagus to Lisbon, passing on the left the purple peaks which drew from Byron one of his masterpieces of description—

“Lo! Cintra’s glorious Eden intervenes  
In variegated maze of mount and glen.  
Ah me! what hand can pencil guide or pen,  
To follow half on which the eye dilates,  
Through views more dazzling unto mortal ken  
Than those whereof such things the bard relates,  
Who to the awestruck world unlocked Elysium’s gates?”

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The horrid crags by toppling convent crown'd,  
The cork trees hoar that clothe the shaggy steep,  
The mountain moss by scorching skies imbrown'd,  
The sunken glen, whose sunless shrubs must weep,  
The tender azure of the unruffled deep,  
The orange tints that gild the greenest bough,  
The torrents that from cliff to valley leap,  
The vine on high, the willow branch below,  
Mix'd in one mighty scene, with varied beauty glow."

It was amidst all this loveliness that, a hundred years ago, was signed the convention which raised such anger in England, that, as the same poet put it—

"Britannia sickens, Cintra! at thy name."

At Lisbon we went to an exhibition, and to a bull-fight, the mild character of which has already been described. At the former were the then King Dom Luis and his son the Crown Prince Dom Carlos, who, as king, was recently assassinated. It was about this time that a great lady of the Court dared the Prince, who was a patron of the bull-ring, to face on foot the bull with unpadded horns. The challenge being accepted, some exciting manœuvres took place, during which Dom Carlos slipped and fell, but recovered himself while the bull was paying attention to another *chulo*. Finally, the exasperated beast, turning again to the Prince, made a furious charge. The latter ran for his life to the barriers, vaulting over them just as the bull's horns crashed into the woodwork beneath him; and thus a life was saved, only to be sacrificed later to the bullet of an anarchist.

The Portuguese language is, in print, very like Spanish, and a fair knowledge of the latter makes reading Portuguese quite easy; but it is another matter to speak or understand the spoken tongue, the accent and inflexions are so different. Calling a cab to return to



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the ship, an endeavour was made to tell the cabman where to go, when he at once said, in a brogue so rich that it seemed to overflow on to the pavement, "An shure it's to the quay that your honour wants me to go, isn't it, now?" How an Irish jarvey came to set up in business in Lisbon I probably asked at the time, but have now forgotten.

A brief call at the picturesque bay of Vigo preceded our entry into the much-maligned Bay of Biscay. It is the fortune of wanderers like myself to meet many disillusion, and the Bay gives rise to one of these. It is popularly supposed to be the terror of those who go down to the sea in ships and do their business in the great waters, and to be in the habit of reeling to and fro and staggering like drunken men. But I have been many times across it, and have never seen it anything but as mild as a labour leader in office. Other disillusion have I had—for instance, that the tiger of the jungle is not a pestilent scourge which should be exterminated at almost any cost. On the contrary, if we exclude the man-eaters, which are a very small percentage of the whole, the tiger is a most valuable auxiliary to the Indian small farmer in helping him to get rid of deer and wild pig which destroy his crops, and if he now and then takes a bullock or a goat in preference, surely the labourer is worthy of his hire. As to the tame village buffalo which supplies the village dairy, she is more than a match for the royal animal, who knows it too well to attack her. The mention of wild animals leads me to a reference to another disillusion of my life—that is the manners and customs of the well-known Savage Club. True, I have been there only once or twice, but when I have, what struck me most was the decorous quietness, not to say solemnity, of the place.

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Arrived in England at last, with all the world before us to choose from, the oars had to be rested on awhile. After all, there is a witchery about English scenery to be found nowhere else in the world. After familiarity with all the gorgeousness of tropic lands, and the profuse colouring of American autumnal tints and the vast panoramas of the Blue Mountains of Australia under the fierce sunlight of the South, to be seen later, the calm restful peace of English meadows and groves comes as a blissful relief. Is there anything in nature's colouring anywhere like that of the brown-green haze which lies under the spreading boughs of great elms in drowsy summer-time? Through this glimmering haze the blue distance, softened by the greys of the moist air, is dimly seen, and—

“Soft mossy lawns

Beneath these canopies extend their swells,  
Fragrant with perfumed herbs and eyed with blooms  
Minute yet beautiful . . . .  
Silence and twilight here, twin sisters, keep  
Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades,  
Like vaporous shapes half seen.”

So sings Shelley of such a scene as the wanderer looks forward to as the white cliffs rise before him. No hard, dry, brilliant atmosphere of other lands could breed such soft tints as these, half hiding such lovely mysteries.

Then, is there any green so green as is to be found in the fields of the old country, as all colonists, and, wonderful to say, also Americans, affectionately call this country. The lawn of St. John's College, Oxford, would be hard to beat in this respect. All this intense greenery is said to be due to our damp climate, but the rain in England is as a drop in the ocean to that of many tropical lands, so that the explanation must be due to the greater diffuse-

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ness of the rain and the more frequent seclusion of the scorching sun.

Nevertheless, all countries have their own separate charms, enriching the wondrous world in which we live. The lilies of all lands toil not neither do they spin, but they, nevertheless, have their vocation, teaching us, wherever we may be, what beauty is, drawing our thoughts from too much care for our own toiling and spinning, and showing us that we do not live by bread alone. Keats speaks in one of his letters of that beauty of Nature which was the Deity of his poems, as being the great exalter and comforter of life. "The sky is our crown, the air our robe, the earth our throne, and the sea our music," that mighty minstrel who, like David, can sound his harp and refresh us with its melody, causing any evil spirit which may be upon us to depart from our souls.

But the great city, not the fair country, was chiefly to be our present *pied-à-terre*. We were destined for most of the time to look upon

"The weariness, the fever, and the fret,  
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan."

When the new arrival comes, after a long absence from what, in our insufferable and impudent self-sufficiency, we call outlandish places, to the nevertheless ever fascinating London, dirty and muddy below and above though it be, the first thing he is made to feel aware of is the *air de mon village* style of his clothes. His hat is too long, his coat too short, his collar down when it ought to be up, and so on. These difficulties got over, and being clothed in our right civilized mind, a quiet suburb was selected to serve for a resting-place until the morrow of fresh woods and pastures new should dawn. Time was passed in writing professional papers

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for engineering societies, and painting on student days at the National Gallery. Adventures, which are the subject of this book, do not usually come to the London sojourner, so that this period may be passed over quickly.

I joined what was called a symposium, a weekly informal gathering largely of the local clergy, Anglican and Nonconformist, who seemed to sink their differences, or at all events leave them aside, during the discussions which were our object, on questions of philosophy and religion not involving sectarian matters. No definite subject was fixed for any evening, but it was allowed to arise as it might. The members were mostly young men, some since becoming prominent, and one especially, the Rev. Robert Horton, then fresh from Oxford, who was feeling the wings by which subsequently he was to rise in the intellectual atmosphere to his present eminence. One of the Anglican clergy, a rector with a rapid utterance, was noted for giving out the banns with a misplacement of a word, owing to this rapidity, which had a curious effect on the meaning of the formula. He would say, after enumerating at great speed the bachelors, spinsters, etc., "If any of you know any just cause or impediment why these persons should not be *respectably* joined together in holy matrimony, ye are to declare it." The adverb used instead of "respectively," which could not be uttered so quickly, seemed to imply that the unions announced were necessary to set matters right. The mention of banns reminds me of another parson who was very absent-minded, and whom I heard say, after reading out several names, John Mathew Thompson, bachelor, and Mary Wilson Jack, spinster, but he stopped after the word Wilson, looking dreamily round the church, thinking perhaps of his sermon, then, apparently to make up time,

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pronounced the last two words "Jack Spinster" together, without any pause between them. The congregation naturally wondered what a "Jack Spinster" was. It was said that this rector used to marry, as far as the banns were concerned, bachelors to widowers and spinsters to widows. I remember when a child thinking that the announcement, "This is the third time of asking," meant that the bachelor had asked the lady three times before she would accept him, and used to wonder at his persistency and her hesitation.

Talking of rapid utterance, if I may digress so much in time and space, a Chairman of Committees of the Melbourne House of Assembly excelled anything I ever heard in this accomplishment, even in stage patter singing. Having, like other parliamentary chairmen, to repeat frequently the formula, "The question is that the motion as amended stand part of the bill, those who are of that opinion say Aye, those of the contrary say No," and then there being no Noes, "I think the Ayes have it." The whole of this would be pronounced as one word, thus—

Quesismoshasmenstnptothbilthosthapinseycontnothkthaysavit.

This without once omitting a syllable, after perhaps twenty repetitions representing the clauses in the bill under consideration. Surely a clear case for the phonograph.

But to return to our parsons. The feasts of intellect and flow of philosophy which constituted our symposia, were not all of solid roast beef and port. There were *entrées* of easier digestion and sparkling wines. There was the curate's story of his dream. The lectern of the church, which was the scene of the dream, was in the not uncommon form of an eagle standing upon a brass globe. He dreamt that he was reading the lessons,

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when suddenly the bird flew from its perch and soared up among the groined arches of the roof, nobody, as is usual in dreams, appearing astonished in the slightest degree at this performance. After sailing about for a while, the eagle slowly descended, and mistaking the old rector's shiny bald head for its own place, settled upon it with great gravity.

The Bible naturally formed the subject of many of our talks, how, for instance, the well-known expression "mess of pottage," supposed to be a quotation from it, never appears in it, either in the Old or New Testament, in any old translation, in the Prayer Book, nor in any formula or article of the Church. The question is, where do we get it from? Once, I gravelled no less than a Bishop on this matter.

It was a layman who remarked on the appropriateness of the text, Joshua vi. 4, "And the priests shall blow with the trumpets," and in illustration of the worldly wisdom and the comprehensiveness of the Scriptures, quoted the description of the host's duties at a dinner-party, in Ecclesiasticus xxxii., which would apply to a fashionable party of the present day.

# AMERICA

## CHAPTER XV

To the West—Distinguished fellow-passengers—Anecdote of Matthew Arnold—New York—A Presidential election—Scurrility of the Press—Autumn tints—Niagara—Chicago—Across the prairies—Salt Lake City a quarter of a century ago—The Tabernacle—Divine Service—Arguments for polygamy—Stories—The Book of Mormon—Wild cats—American travel—San Francisco—Some tall tales—Sandwich Islands—Honolulu—Samoa—Robert Louis Stevenson—An Irishman without a birthday—New Zealand.

**T**HE beginning of the longest of my exiles was now at hand. Hearing that the Government of New South Wales were about to spend £15,000,000 in the construction of new railways, I determined to see if my services could be made available in that distant part of the world. Hitherto, my going abroad was in view of a certainty, agreements being made in London and passage provided, but circumstances had changed since, and the colonies had so far been self-provided with skilled professional assistance, that though gladly welcoming volunteer additions when pressure arose, they were not obliged to secure it in London as formerly. Hence the expense of the voyage had to be incurred and the risk undertaken that at all events, in a Micawber-like spirit, something would turn up in a new country.

“Thus with imagin’d wing our swift scene flies,”

and we were soon on the ever-restless sea, this time on

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the North Atlantic, for by travelling to our destination westwards across America and the Pacific new countries were to be seen, and I had always longed to see the Great Republic of the West, here being my opportunity, while new turns were to follow in the variety show of my life.

The steamer we travelled in from Liverpool to New York was one of the largest in the world at that time, though it would appear quite insignificant beside the ocean liners of the present day. And in a figurative sense some of our fellow-passengers were like the ship, for they turned out to be some of the greatest people on the planet, as the Yankees might say. We had Madame Adelina Patti, with her husband and rather extensive suite, the American millionaire of the day, the chief of the Salvation Army, and the champion prize-fighter of the world. The millionaires were at that time bright particular stars in the social firmament, and not as now forming a sort of milky way.

In the latest Cunarders now running there are two regal suites containing each six magnificently decorated rooms for kings and queens ; but it is to be supposed that when the genuine article is not occupying these glorious quarters, kings of the pork, soap, or whisky variety keep them aired. These special cabins being unknown at the time I speak of, our millionaire, though an object of interest, did not disdain to breathe the same atmosphere as that inhaled by less gorgeous folk on board. It was pretty, as old Pepys would have said, to hear, as I did, this particular Cræsus discoursing one day on the curious chances of the world—how to some men come wealth and comfort and to others adversity, quoting Cowper's lines—

“ God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform.”



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I wonder did he think it mysterious that he should be in the former condition? Probably, for he seemed quite unassuming in his manners and disposition—in fact, quite an attractive personality.

Matthew Arnold had been a short time previously the guest of a cultured American family in New York State, some of whose members were fellow-passengers of ours, and some tales of him were told. One of these illustrates the difference of meanings attached by the Americans and English to certain words, those of the former being probably the original sense in England when America was first colonized, and surviving there. This was the use by Arnold in conversation of the word "nasty," which is an unmentionable outcast in American polite vocabulary. The poet and essayist of sweetness and light and culture had to live this down.

When I speak of the unfavourable impression made upon us by New York City, it must be remembered that that impression was made many years ago, when rough cobble-stones in the chief streets made the transit through them by conductorless omnibuses almost unbearable, and the rough-and-ready manners of the people were new to us. As to the last adjective, however, the shop and office assistants did not appear to be nearly so quick in their movements as those of London, this being the more surprising as Yankee go-aheadness is proverbial. Then, though this might have happened in any *civilized* place, though the adjective indicates one of life's greater ironies, we lost in New York nearly all our jewellery, which was stolen during conveyance of luggage from steamer to hotel, and never recovered.

New York was in the turmoil of a Presidential election—Cleveland versus Blaine—when we passed through—a novel experience. Every man, woman, and even child seemed to take an absorbing interest in the result,

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the streets being crowded even all night. What struck us was the scurrility of the Press after the dull respectability of the English newspapers at that time—a scurrility that may have been intensified by the political excitement of the occasion. This was accompanied by an apparent calm indifference of the persons attacked. No one even appeared to dream of taking a libel action which, at home, would be the inevitable result of some of the epithets applied to prominent men. One paragraph I remember, in which an editor spoke of a rival as a writer who could cram more lies into a square inch of print than anyone he knew of. Evidently there were some among his own friends who were fairly skilful in this accomplishment, but not having the finished style of the object of his description.

Some happy chance decided that November should be the period of crossing America, for never does the foliage look better than at that time. In the late fall, as it is picturesquely termed, the splendid drapery of the forest shows the gracious colouring of the closing year, from the mellow browns and brilliant crimsons down to the golden yellows of the maples and sumachs, almost every conceivable tint that was ever found in sunset sky, land or sea, being set out in contrast to the rich dark green of the intermingled pines. The banks of the Hudson River, which we skirted for about 150 miles to Albany, seemed to afford the finest stretches of this forest scenery, but there were glorious repetitions now and again all the way to Chicago.

Arrived at Niagara, we boarded, with other travellers, an omnibus to cross the river to the Canadian side to stay the night there. The bridge, which appeared in the moonlight to be a frail structure of wire, hung over the vast boiling and surging abyss of the river just below the falls, which we thus saw under the silvery

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glimmering light of the moon at its full. It is said that Niagara disappoints at first, but the anticipation must be great that would bring this to pass. It is inconceivably magnificent to the first view, ever and always. Our fellow-travellers in the omnibus were praising the consideration of the driver in keeping his horses at a slow walk, while we, spell-bound, drank in the glorious scene of the great mass of falling water, and looked down on the seething foam swirling dangerously in the awful chasm below. But after we got to the other side he calmly told us that the bridge was so frail that if he had not crept over it so slowly we should have broken it and been dropped into the torrent below. It was just as well that our emotions in crossing were not disturbed by the prospect of this possibility. There is something in a paternal government, after all, that looks after our safety. In England, public officers inspect and guarantee the safety of public structures, but in America at that time, though much improvement has taken place since, competition was supposed to be sufficient for protection. For example, if the works of a railway were unsafe, the damages incurred by accident would lead either to amendment or the establishment of a better rival line. American legislation is largely on these lines. There is no penalty, as in England, for jumping off or on a train in motion. The Yankees say, if a man likes to risk his life in that sort of way, why should he not be allowed to do so? It is his own affair.

The hotel close by the Canadian Falls, where we stayed, vibrated continuously from the shock of the ever falling mass of water and its thunderous sound. In the East of the Holy Scriptures there is no Niagara. Where, then, did Ezekiel and St. John get their splendid similes of the voice of God being as the

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sound of many waters? The voices of nature are wonderful and various. I have already spoken of the almost human cry of the jackals, a long wail of hopeless despair, such as we could imagine rising from those entering Dante's gate of the Inferno—

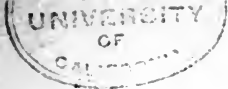
“Through me men pass to city of great woe ;  
Through me men pass to endless misery ;  
Through me men pass where all the lost ones go.

Ye that pass in, all hope abandon ye !”

The sougling of the wind through the pine forest—no other trees give the same effect—is a sound of ineffable and intense sadness, but the voice of many waters is a sound of resistless power which, more than any other manifestation of nature, even than the crash of thunder, because more continuous, gives to the imagination the semblance of the words of the Eternal.

The falls were seen in splendid weather, by sunrise, noonday, and sunset, as well as by moonlight, and in the former the ever-shifting delicate vaporous rainbow hung glimmering above the waters. And yet in the presence of all this sublimity one of those standing near, as we gazed, said: “Why, it's only a lot of water!” It reminds me of many years before, when I went to see the ruins of Melrose Abbey, and a rich Glasgow pig-jobber, also there, said: “It's a braw fine place, but it seems vara much out o' repair, mind ye.”

At Niagara visitors are generally induced to put on waterproofs, which are provided for the purpose, and by descending steps, to pass under between the wall of rock over which the cascade falls, and the green sheet of water falling over it from above. Though the effect is curious, it must be said to be thoroughly disappointing, besides being dangerous from the slipperiness of the



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rocks to which the spectators have to cling, while the damp vapour penetrates the skin and throat so much, that one of our party got what would now be called influenza, and a delay of several days in the next stopping-place—Chicago—had to be incurred.

In this latter rather interesting city, the inhabitants still appeared to be suffering from fear of a repetition of the great fire of thirteen years before, for in many of the great buildings, and they are great as regards dimensions, light iron stairs are constructed on the outside to enable the dwellers to escape, and in all the bedrooms of our gigantic hotel ropes were coiled up to be let down outside of the windows. But owing to the height of these, there would be in case of fire a choice of something like that implied in the proverb of that between the frying-pan and its surroundings.

In the vestibule of the great dining-hall, in which probably four or five hundred took their meals daily, stood a couple of negro servants taking the visitors' hats and coats, etc., and it is one of the wonders of the world how these, without the assistance of tickets, manage to restore to each his own as the diners pass out again. It only shows what the human brain can do if it has only one thing on which to bestow its attention. As we had stayed in a comparatively small hotel in New York, this was our first experience of one of the monster caravanserais which were then unknown outside the States, but are now in every moderate-sized city all over the world.

Another new experience was that of the sleeping-car, at that time solely an American institution. I do not know how it is now, but then there was no division between the men's and women's accommodation, and the traveller had to climb into his berth fully dressed,

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close his or her curtains, and unclithe in the attitude of an inverted picture hook.

Here began our five or six days' train journey across the great continent of the West, occupying during the day what were called parlour-cars, heated to suffocation, and getting out into the biting cold of November on the prairies to feed in lonely wayside stations. On the first long day, we drew up in the middle of the interminable desert, with no station or habitation of any kind within view on the vast plain. Several of the passengers got out to stretch their legs and, notwithstanding the intense cold, to breathe some fresh air, but none seemed surprised at the long halt which was getting rather tedious. Asking one of them why we did not go on, he said: "Wal, guess we're waitin' for something to turn up"; which was strictly true, for being a single line of rails, and there being at this point a loop or siding which I had not previously observed, our train was waiting until an expected one from the opposite direction should arrive and enable us to proceed.

Day after day was passed through this apparently uninhabited region, though at one or two stopping-places were seen, besides the white railway employees, two or three ragged-looking loafing red Indians, not at all the noble savage of Fenimore Cooper. They are allowed to travel free on the railways, but they were not then the only deadheads, as free ticket-holders are called, for in America at that time anybody in the most remote way connected with a railway official could get a free pass, such as the first cousin of a station-master, and all ministers of religion, *ipso facto*, travelled free. This privilege must have been greatly abused by unscrupulous persons who could easily dress the character. I understand that these liberal arrangements have since been greatly modified.

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Omaha and Cheyenne City were the only places which seemed to show any signs of habitation in the long reach from Chicago to Ogden, at which point we had arranged to diverge from the main route a few miles southward to visit the Salt Lake City.

It is a far cry from Florence, the great shrine of human intellect of the past, to the brand-new city of the Mormons, or of the latter-day saints, as they prefer to call themselves, yet in some topographical respects they are not unlike. Both nestle in a fair valley surrounded by hills, though round the western city they are so high as to culminate in snow-capped peaks which shine like dazzling silver points in the rarefied air, and blush to crimson at the first kiss of the all-conquering sun.

Water has been well described as the eye of landscape, and, despite its name, any comprehensive view of the many-wived city excludes the great Salt Lake. But notwithstanding its blindness in this respect, the capital of the Mormons affords a noble prospect, due chiefly to its magnificent background, for its buildings are commonplace, even if the peculiar elongated dome-covered tabernacle be included in the general view, conspicuous among the rest.

The journey was so timed that we had a Sunday in the city, and so had the advantage of attending a Mormon service at the tabernacle. The building, which has, I believe, been since superseded by another, was of oblong shape with semicircular ends and a dome-shaped roof. It was capable of holding ten thousand people, and its acoustic properties were unrivalled. The whole of the raised dais occupying the semicircle at the northern end of the building was filled by those taking part in the service, in which the general congregation were only auditors. This raised portion was furnished with a long table placed in a line with the diameter of the semi-

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circle, and covered with a white cloth, on which were numerous silver chalices and salvers. Behind this was a row of raised seats for the bishops and elders who officiated ; in this, if we regard the table as an altar, the Mormons, whether they know it or not, follow the ritual of the Primitive Church. Above and behind these were ranged reading desks, and, centrally, the great organ which was built by the saints themselves in the city, and was then the second largest in America. It certainly was of exquisite tone, and played with great taste and skill. The seats for the congregation faced the dais and were intersected by numerous aisles.

The first service, of which there are generally two every Sunday, begins, in order to give time to the country folk to come in, at 2 p.m., when a hymn is sung, accompanied by the organ and a string-band led by a conductor. This is followed by extempore prayers and other hymns, during one of which latter the bishops and elders break up and bless the bread, which is then carried round in the silver salvers by the vergers, and distributed to everyone, including even the babies, who are always brought to church. The babies howl vociferously during the earlier part of the proceedings ; in fact, the cherubs continually do cry, so that the first sermon, for there are two in each service, can hardly be heard. *Par parenthèse*, I may remark that, interviewing next day one of the preachers whom we heard, and remarking on the splendid acoustic properties of the building, he said that these had their drawbacks, for they helped the babes and sucklings as well as the preacher to carry on the proceedings. The second preacher has a great advantage, as by the time his turn comes the infant saints are mostly asleep. Water is used instead of wine in the Communion, and during the distribution the first sermon is preached.



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The preachers are supposed to be called on unexpectedly by the presiding bishop. The sermons we heard, especially the second one, were of a very high order ; so good, in fact, that it was difficult to believe that, as to the call, there was not some little understanding beforehand. There was no allusion in either sermon to polygamy, which was then in full swing in Utah, though since suppressed by the United States Government. Nor was there, during the service, any reading of the Bible, or of the Book of Mormon, which is the Scripture of the Saints. The hymns sung were those of the Ancient and Modern edition of the Anglican Church. The congregation sat during the entire service, except when they stood at the final blessing.

A brother—they are all brothers and sisters—walked home with us, endeavouring to convert us. He was Scotch, and came from Glasgow. Among other things, he said that he had been the means of introducing sparrows into the State from home, and that they had multiplied to an extraordinary extent, whether through a more extensive range of polygamy than they were used to in Scotland or other cause was not stated. I visited too the eloquent preacher of the second sermon, who was also editor of the leading local newspaper and the author of a book called *Mormon Doctrine*—quite a leading light. He told me he had formerly been an Anglican, and was born a Bow Bells man. He referred me to his book for the arguments for polygamy, the principal one being embodied in the following paragraph copied from it :—

“In the case of a man marrying a wife in the everlasting covenant who dies while he continues in the flesh and marries another by the same divine law, each wife will come forth in her order and

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enter with him into his glory. Is there any reason why this should not be so? Is not each of these wives entitled to her position in eternity by virtue of the sealing power which made her part of the man? Why should one enter into the exaltation of the celestial world, and the other be relegated to singleness and servitude? They all become one in the patriarchal order of family government; and if this be the case in heaven, why should not similar conditions, so far as possible, exist on earth? Is earth holier than heaven? If a man receives from the Lord more wives than one under the sealing ordinances of celestial marriage, where is the moral wrong? They belong to no other man, but are his by mutual consent of all the interested parties, and they live together in the marriage state one as much as the other."

The Elder also pointed out the sanctioned practice of polygamy in the Old Testament, and the absence of general prohibition in the New Testament. Of course, polygamy was taken quite seriously by the Mormons of that generation, though I fancy for practical reasons most of them only had one wife, but the practice has given rise to some droll stories. One was that the manager of a theatrical touring company visiting the city, thought he would get some patronage by giving to one of the leading citizens a complimentary ticket, which included the members of his family; but when the performance was about to begin, it was found that all of the rows of the reserved seats were filled by the family, and there was no room for anybody else.

I was talking to a Gentile lady on this subject, and asked her if she married a Mormon and her husband had added a second wife to the establishment, what would happen? "Guess," she said, "there would be music in that house."

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The population of Salt Lake City seemed to be mostly bishops—not the prim conventional shovel hat and gaiter sort, but a free-and-easy kind, clothed in well-worn tweeds with soft hat and questionable collar. At the hotel billiard-room I heard :—

“Say, Bishop, a fine cannon tharn! It was so, Bishop, but guess I can do better nor that anyhow!” and so on. There were what were called wet and dry billiards, in the former case the losing prelate or brother standing drinks.

I dwell on the Mormons because the state of things then existing is now of the past, never to return. Though the railway reached them, their geographical isolation from the rest of the States was then practically complete, while polygamy, which the central government, whose laws it violated, found impossible to suppress, formed a moral isolation not less conspicuous. For instance, the presidential election had just been determined when we passed through, but there was no interest in it; only a single paragraph in the Monday paper referred to it, but that item showed the intensity of this interest elsewhere, and as it is characteristic, I give it here. It is dated from Detroit :—

“Cleveland’s victory shakes the earth and makes half of it tremble with defeat, while the other half cry and shout with gladness and victory. The air is wild with tumult here to-night. Cannons are pealing forth rounds of thunder, deafened by the cheering of the multitude; fireworks illuminate the sky, sending out crimson darts, balloons dropping rockets of fiery colours. The Phalanx banners, transparencies and torches presented a glorious appearance. The Campus is crowded from the Opera House to the City Hall with enthusiastic democrats, becoming so dense it is impossible to penetrate to reach the Opera House. The broom procession marched up the avenue double

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quick, each man carrying a broom, and into the Opera House, which was soon filled up, and thousands that could not gain admittance surrounded the platform in front of the building and thus held a double rally. As the procession entered the building they sang—

‘Ma, Ma, where’s my pa?  
Gone to the White House, ha, ha, ha!’

which was greeted with rousing cheers.”

The quaint phraseology of this paragraph is a type of American announcements of that time. I remember seeing a notice up in a shop window in Salt Lake City: “In God we trust, all others Cash!”

It is curious that the Book of Mormon, a copy of which I possess, does not inculcate polygamy, and though said to have been translated into English in the last century from buried plates discovered in America, is written in Tudor English, apparently in imitation of the Bible. The translation of the latter, however, is in the language of that era, simply because it was the ordinary phraseology of that time. There was no special sanctity about it then, nor is there now, beyond that which has since been attached to it from over three centuries of Church use. Why, therefore, did Joseph Smith, the originator of Mormonism, who was also the translator, adopt this archaic language of the sixteenth century? Most of us, no doubt, think that the want of the age is not new religions, but a greater amount of acting up to the old ones. Though from these and many causes we may look upon the Book of Mormon as a forgery, it has many good precepts, and the latter-day saints have in many ways proved their zeal and their faith for which they have fought and exiled themselves in hardships almost as great as those endured for any religion. They are a simple-minded race, as a rule, and have turned a desert into a garden. Let us,

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therefore, follow St. Paul and think no evil, one of the greatest texts of the greatest Book.

Resuming our long journey, we crossed the Western Mountain ranges and at length reached the milder climate of California. Shortly after we left the plains, however, the negro conductor came through the car taking a list of our names, the reason being, as he cheerfully told us, that in case of an accident the newspapers might give a correct list of those smashed up. It was a custom at that time in America to run what were called wild cat trains. The reader should be reminded that in countries where, like Western America, there are, in general, single lines of rails, it is, of course, only possible for one train to pass another at certain places at a station or elsewhere, where the railway is widened into two lines for the length of a train—a sort of refuge siding—so as to allow one to get out of the way of the other. The time-table is so arranged, supported by the use of signals and telegraphs, as to prevent two trains approaching each other in opposite directions on one length, which would otherwise result in collisions. What is called a wild cat train dispenses with these precautions, the driver running on chance of reaching the refuge siding before one meeting him passes it. If this fails, what is called a butting collision is likely to happen, especially on the Western Mountains, on the steep gradients of which it is so difficult to stop going down hill.

Wild cats were rather plentiful in the West, so that the conductor's duties in taking the names were, perhaps, not altogether useless, but they had a sobering effect on the passengers, and caused some of them frequently to look out of the windows, ostensibly to admire the scenery, but with an *arrière pensée* of curiosity as to what might possibly turn up in front of

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us. Signals, too, were not numerous. We passed over a swing bridge—that is, one which is placed across a navigable river and can be swung open to let through a vessel with masts or funnel too high to go under it when closed. In most countries where this occurs there is an elaborate system of signals which are actuated by the swinging open of the bridge, and which show to an approaching engine-driver at a considerable distance from the bridge that he must draw up till another signal is shown indicating that the bridge is closed again, when he may go on over it. In our case, the bridge being open, a small hand-flag was stuck in the sand quite close to the bridge. A light breeze of wind might have blown it over, and then the convenience of having the names left at a previous station for publication in case of accident was obvious. No wonder that in railway newspapers of the time there was a regular heading of “Railway Accidents of the Week” at the top of a rather lengthy paragraph. But a very substantial improvement has been made since in providing against accidents in America, and what has been stated above does not in any way represent the condition of things now.

The Sacramento River in California was crossed by a huge steam ferry, our train, with three others carrying goods, being run on to a large pontoon which took us to the other side where the trains were run on shore. This was the precursor of several train ferries in other parts of America, and since in Denmark. It is also now proposed for connecting England with the Continent between Dover and Calais.

San Francisco was a much more attractive city than either New York or Chicago, and it can well be believed, even from our few days' experience at the end of November, that California possesses one of the

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finest climates in the world, the range of the thermometer being in general only about 20 degrees, 45 to 65 degrees, and the State is a champion fruit and vegetable producer. I extract the following information from a local paper, but whether the reporter had a pair of strong magnifying glasses with him is not stated. He speaks of seeing an onion 21 lb. weight, a turnip which equalled in diameter the top of a flour barrel, a cabbage which measured 13 ft. 6 in. round the body, a beet 63 lb., carrots 31 ft. in length, another turnip of 100 lb. weight, and refers to a dinner of twelve persons at which there was a potato larger than an ordinary hat, of which all partook, leaving at least one half untouched.

I suppose there must have been some foundation for these vast statements, but they somehow remind me—though no doubt they should not, being in a respectable journal—of a lecture which I once heard on Egyptian archæology. In speaking of the engraved clay tablets on which the ancient Egyptians used to write their letters, the lecturer stated that in the excavation at one buried town a tablet had been found which was deciphered as an invitation to dinner from a citizen in a neighbouring village to one in the town. This statement of the recovery of a friendly note of many thousand years ago rather opened the eyes of the audience; but there was more to come, for the lecturer went on to say that shortly after, in an excavation in the neighbouring village, was found a tablet containing the answer. We left the hall feeling that after that we could believe anything. Hence the belief in the cabbage aforesaid and its corpulent companions.

The wonderful progress of California in its sixty years of settlement is typical of the American's methods. The early failure of cotton, silk, tobacco, rice, and tea, and

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the phenomenal success later of fruit and other products illustrates this. He tries everything that has any possibility of success, makes many failures of which we generally hear little, and a few great successes of which we hear much, but being ahead of his rivals, these latter more than compensate for the former. The cautious and conservative Englishman waits for others to break their bones over experiments, and then when success is quite assured, takes the matter up solidly and forcibly, and, in the case of machinery, constructs it with such strength that it is obsolete long before it is worn out. But his smart cousin by that time is a long way ahead of him ; while the German, slow to originate, but wisely educating himself into a technical efficiency far beyond either of them, steps in to perfect Anglo-Saxon inventions, and becomes a formidable rival.

One of the great sights of San Francisco used to be the seal rocks on the Pacific coast. I say used to be, for not long after our visit a vessel containing dynamite blew up close to them, and I believe shattered them to pieces, as well as a hotel on the mainland opposite. These rocks were so crowded with seals that the rocks themselves seemed to be in constant motion, and the barking and grunting were incessant.

The harbour of San Francisco is the most beautiful I have seen, and this is a large order, for, either before or since, the following, which have more or less pretensions in that way, have come within the scope of my wanderings : Dublin Bay, Milford Haven, Bombay, Bay of Naples, Cadiz, Lisbon, Vigo, Gibraltar, Genoa, Honolulu, Auckland, Sydney, Hobart, and Capetown.

The Californian harbour runs parallel with the Pacific coast, from which it is separated by moderately high hills, and through these the comparatively narrow entrance called the Golden Gate appears to have been



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cut, as with a knife, by the hand of nature. The landward side is backed by the splendid and lofty mountains of the coast range. San Francisco being on the Pacific side of the harbour close to the Golden Gate on the south side, is a fine point of view for this glorious scene.

Between the high brown cliff-like walls of this mighty gate, beside which our ocean liner seemed like a toy boat on the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens, we steamed away to our fifth continent. By the way, Australia is now always termed by its people a continent, but in the geography of my earlier years it was more generally known as the island of New Holland.

Again came the awful loneliness of the ocean for ten long weary days, the air warming up sensibly on every successive one, until at last the Sandwich Islands rose, as it were, out of the red sunset. We came to the quay of Honolulu at nearly midnight, and to show what a solitude the inhabitants of these isles of the blest enjoy, it being made known that we were to leave at sunrise, all the shops and hotels in the town were specially opened all night for us, so that the innocent natives should have the full opportunity of despoiling those who go down to the sea in ships, as is their nature to, all over the world. It was as if, as Coleridge says—

“We were the first, that ever burst  
Into that silent sea.”

The wan faces of the Europeans and Americans, the luxuriant vegetation topped by the nodding palms, and as we sailed away the fierce sun, even in these December days, reminded us that we were entering the tropics, and after steaming mostly through calms for another week or so, anchored for a while among the intensely tropical Samoan Island group. The natives, who surrounded us

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in canoes, seemed physically a very fine race, with rich copper-coloured skins.

Subsequently, these beautiful islands, it will be remembered, were the last home of the novelist and essayist, Robert Louis Stevenson, with whom I had the sympathy arising from the tie of a common profession, for he was originally trained as a civil engineer.

Here he wrote some of his later works, and after a four years' residence, died at Vailima in December, 1894. He had taken much part in troublous politics of the islands, and on his death his body was taken by six sturdy Samoans, by whom he was much beloved, to the summit of the precipitous peak of Vaea where he had wished to be buried. So he is at rest for ever, among the scenes he loved so well.

Just before arriving in New Zealand we had to cross the meridian 180 degrees west and east, the antipodes of longitude, and in order to keep time with the world's almanac had to lose a day—that is to say, to go directly from Saturday to Monday; but as the captain's birthday would have been on the missing Sunday, and it would have been lost if, to use an expression appropriate to my nationality, the omission had been celebrated on the Sunday, it was decided to leave out Saturday instead. All of us, therefore, who did not return in the reverse direction lost a day, never to be recovered unless in the little pieces of the extended days of our return to the old country, possibly years later, while those who remained at the Antipodes never got it back at all. For us there were only 364 days in that year, a sort of true leap year, for we jumped over a day—a missing

“Syllable of recorded time.”

In the case of voyages in the opposite direction—that is to say, eastwards across this meridian—an extra day

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must be interpolated to keep time with the world. It is said that an Irishman, which he wasn't at all at all, as he would say, being born on the ocean, was launched into this sea of troubles on the day following the 29th February of a leap year when the ship in which his mother was a passenger was crossing the 180 degrees meridian eastwards. His natal day was therefore the interpolated 30th February, which for him never occurred again. So though he lived to a great age, he never had a subsequent birthday.

We only spent half an hour in New Zealand, at Auckland, to exchange mails, and there was no adventure, so I have no claim to include it in the "continents" of my title, for though New Zealand is not generally so called, I have no doubt that those who live there have such fairly large ideas of its importance and necessity to the rest of the world as to consider it in that light. All, however, must admit that it is a fruitful and beautiful portion of the earth.

I will mention, in passing, a Maori definition of a gentleman which I heard later, and taking it as referring only to the externals of that indefinable personage, it is exceedingly apt: "Gentleman-Gentleman don't care damn what he do. Pig-Gentleman very particular." A forcible way of expressing the care taken of the "pig" variety to avoid anything which might betray his inferior upbringing, while the other, having nothing to betray, takes no care accordingly.

The transit from New Zealand to Australia is across perhaps the least pacific part of the Pacific Ocean, and we felt its ever restless waters

"Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea."

# AUSTRALIA

## CHAPTER XVI

Sydney harbour and city—Sir Henry Parkes—Anecdotes—The Bush—Its fauna—Camp life—Strange sequel to a wish—Townships—A fancy ball—An ignorant tutor—The greatest bridge in the Southern Hemisphere—Beauty of the site—Great engineering difficulties—A catastrophe averted—A critical voyage—An exciting episode—Yankee stories—Australian holidays—An awful railway accident—A hurricane—Earl of Carnarvon and Lord Brassey.

**WE** now came to the notable harbour of Sydney of which its inhabitants are so justly proud, it being so deep and extensive as to be sufficient to shelter all the fleets of the world. It is so full of indentations and harbourlets, that though the main navigable surface is little over a mile wide and some eight miles long, there are over two hundred miles of water frontage along its shores. Wooded hills, among which picturesque dwellings nestle, surround the bright waters of the harbour, broken only where the city itself skirts its edge—waters which are flecked with the white wings of the yachts which seem to dot the surface like so many butterflies.

But it is the view of the city itself and its environs from the heights on the opposite northern shore of the harbour which is one of the most fascinating imaginable. Take one of them—Gore Hill—the prospect from which takes in the town and also the rich undulating country to the westward, the whole view covering nearly



FARM COVE, SYDNEY HARBOUR



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a semicircle of which the spectator's eye is the centre. Photography, in this as in many other similar places, is altogether powerless to represent the effect. It gives *brutalement*, as the French would say, the actual objects before us in their exact proportionate and perspective size, hence the foreground is magnified beyond its importance, the middle distance is insignificant, and the far-off features diminished almost to nothingness. On the other hand, in the image printed on the eye direct, the imagination, warmed by the charm of the main objects of attraction, discards the foreground, and investing the more distant points each with its own interest, magnifies them to the mental vision, and a true proportion is established. It is for this reason that the photo postcard, which is supposed to make all the world pictorially kin, fails so badly. Fair nature demands a *tête-à-tête*, not a love letter.

Seen from Gore Hill, to the left and beneath us is the many towered and domed city bathed in the bright sunshine of the south, and reflecting its life and business in the shipping on the calm waters that separate us from it. These, dotted with smaller craft, contract more immediately below us into rivers of which, further, we get only glimpses through the dark foliage.

“ And silver white the river gleams  
As if Diana, in her dreams,  
Had drop't her silver bow  
Upon the meadows low.”

The ordinary monotonous greyish blue-green tones of Australian trees are mitigated by the presence of a large proportion of exotic firs, orange-groves, and orchards, so that rich browns, greens, and russets prevail, melting into the quiet greys, purples, and blues of the gently swelling mountains of the distance. Cloud

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shadows fleck the broad expanse, which is further varied here and there by thin wreaths of rising smoke, suggesting life and habitation. The brilliant atmosphere, similar to that of sunny Italy, adorns and caresses this glorious scene, and when the golden evening brightens all the west, brings out and intensifies every outline of tree and building.

At that period the electric light was not in general use, but since then the waters of the harbour at night sparkle with the saloon lights of the hundreds of steam ferry-boats gliding in all directions to and from the city and the numerous residential spots on the shores of the harbour, the city with its reflected lights shining like a jewelled casket.

So far as I know, no city possesses such a variety of beautiful suburbs as Sydney. They nestle round eminences from which the bright blue waters of the winding harbour and its ever passing vessels are conspicuously in view. The beauty-spots, however, are fast disappearing, the trail of the villa builder is over many of them, and smug prosperity has to be paid for by the destruction of the picturesque.

The time for seeing many of these scenic attractions of Sydney was soon, however, to cease. As a precaution, I had provided myself with letters of introduction to the Governors of most of the Australian colonies and other important people, from influential friends at home, but I had not got one to the Governor of the colony to which I actually happened to come, it appearing at that time to be the best opening. However, the time had gone by when letters to Governors were of much use, and one's own legs, after all, are the best to stand on.

One of the introductions, which, however, was of no use as regards self-advancement, was to a noted man of that time, Sir Henry Parkes, perhaps the only really far-



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seeing statesman that Australia has as yet produced. He initiated federation, but it is not so sure, had he lived, that it would have been carried out in the way in which it has been done. He went out in his youth to Australia and began by making and selling toys, ending by making laws, which in many cases were just as breakable. Being subsequently, as will be seen, in a Government department, I came to know how often the Government broke their own laws. For example, the legislation concerning the construction of public works by the State bristled with safeguards of various interests, but it was a common thing for the Government to disregard them if nobody objected. A very bad example by the rulers to the ruled.

Parkes was a very able man, wholly self-educated, but his *h's* were amongst the unemployed, he could never find work for them. I heard him give the most crushing reply to a political opponent that I have ever known at home or abroad. When he was Premier, the Leader of the Opposition brought up a vote of censure on the Government, and occupied some hours in a speech in support of it. At the close, Sir Henry Parkes quietly rose and said that if the hon. member had called on him in his office that afternoon, he would have gladly helped him through and given him a list of the mistakes that the Government had really made, and which were much more serious than the worst of the long list which the hon. member had been able to discover.

Parkes went home to England once or twice, and spoke at several country towns in favour of his adopted land. It was said that in nearly every one of them he started his address by pointing out that forty years ago he had left that particular town for Australia with a half-crown in his pocket, and his luggage in a bundle at

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the end of a stick cut from a hedge. Having thus established a sort of pride in having produced the great Australian statesman, the audience became at once sympathetic and his way was much smoothed.

A full-length portrait of Sir Henry was exhibited in one of the galleries in Sydney, the pose chosen by the artist being an easy one, the figure having one hand in his trouser pocket. A spectator having said that it was a fine work, the attitude being most natural, his companion said he did not think it at all natural, for "see," he said, "he has got his hand in his *own* pocket this time." However, this last remark was a libel, for Sir Henry Parkes was always poor and died so.

I had not been long in New South Wales when the Government offered me an appointment which I accepted. There, generally, nearly all the important civil engineering works are carried out by the State, which, of course, implies that it is the chief employer of the profession.

My first duty was to go up country into the Bush, in which I soon found myself camped with an assistant engineer and some men, engaged in a survey of a route for a proposed railway. The Bush was strikingly different from any forest country I had hitherto seen. Except in the comparatively small cultivated patches, since that time however much increased, the whole country, including that used for sheep-runs, is, as a rule, covered with trees, every one of which, except to a forest expert, is virtually the same. They are also evergreen, or more correctly, ever bluey-green, so that the added variety of dress due to season, which comes periodically to the already great variety of form of European and American trees, is absent. The Australian gum is ever the same, spring, summer, autumn, and winter, while its thin drooping leaf sheds little or no shade. The

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trunk only serves as a shelter from the fierce rays of the sun. However, in this terrible monotony there is something sublime in the thought of its immensity, considering that, with little variation, luxuriant on the coast, stunted in the interior, the same sort of landscape stretches across over two thousand miles of the earth's surface.

The main relief from this appalling sameness is where, here and there, in order to stimulate the growth of the grass for the sheep, the trees are what is called ring-barked. This operation, which consists of cutting a ring of bark away from near the base of the trunk, kills the tree and the leaves fall off, but the trunk and branches remain for many years, and as many of the gum trees have pale grey stems, the effect is to give the impression of a gaunt crowd of skeletons with outstretched arms, weird and desolate in the extreme. Perhaps it is for this reason that Australian birds never sing, they scream and croak. The noise of a flock of cockatoos, of which there are vast numbers in the Bush, is something to remember. The black cockatoo, which is comparatively quiet and not gregarious, only appears just before bad weather. Where he is at other times is unknown. But of all the noises in the Bush, that made by the so-called locusts is the most deafening. While they are at work no one can hear himself speak. There is a sort of cuckoo whose note is only heard at night, and it is said that the original one was an importation from home, and, their ideas being intensely conservative, they still utter their cry at a time when it is daylight in Europe, disregarding their Australian surroundings of the darkness of night.

The animal world of the Australian Bush is, as is well known, different from that of all other countries, the kangaroo, wallaby, opossum, native bear, wallaroo,

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kangaroo rat, and paddy melon, the latter being not, as might be supposed, an Irish fruit, but an animal like a small kangaroo. All these, with the iguana, a sort of tree-climbing lizard but almost as big as an alligator, were seen in plenty during our operations in the field, as well as many dangerous snakes. In the country further inland, with which I became acquainted later, were the graceful emus which are so seldom interfered with, having no commercial value, that they are quite tame and scarcely deign to move at the approach of man.

But the most extraordinary creature, now becoming extinct, though at that time fairly plentiful, was the platypus, which I have heard compared to a tailor, viz. a beast with a bill. This amphibious animal-bird-fish-reptile has the head and beak of a bird, four legs like a mammal, but with web feet like a duck, and lives mostly in the water, while the skin is like that of a seal with a valuable fur.

Nor must I forget the laughing jackass, which is not a donkey that brays—a beast unknown in Australia—but a bird that laughs. It is preserved owing to its hostility to snakes. One of these birds seeing a snake flies to a high branch and laughs as if its sides would split. Hearing this miles away, other jackasses fly up and they pounce down together on the unfortunate reptile and soon kill him, after which they all fly to an adjacent tree and laugh together a pæan of joy and triumph. Another bird, whose proper name I forget, is popularly called “More Pork,” as he is continually uttering this somewhat greedy phrase. But, of course, all these cries are only occasional, and do not break much the monotony of the lonely Bush, so that there is not much pleasure in these pathless woods.

Sometimes coming in from tramping in damp ground,

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on taking off your boots you find them and your socks drenched with blood. This is the effect of leeches, the bites of which are not noticed in walking. The mosquitoes are nearly as troublesome as those in India, especially near the coast, and the common fly in the Bush sticketh closer than a brother, and there is more of him. As to snakes, those who have been much in Australia always look down from habit, even when crossing the harmless fields of England.

The Australian is much more easily satisfied in his camp equipment than the European in India. A small single tent without carpet, a chair or two, a table fashioned out of provision cases, and two logs cut from the bush supported on props sunk in the ground, with canvas bags stretched between for a bed, is enough for him. Then as to his food, what can be said of a man who drinks boiled tea with his breakfast, boiled tea with his lunch, boiled tea for his afternoon tea, and boiled tea with his dinner? And notwithstanding this indifference to the whims and necessities of "Little Mary" the cook, or the man who is curiously so called, of the Australian camp is the great subject of contention. Many were the messes, savoury or otherwise, which were brought up to me for judgment from the men's dining tent to decide some difference as to its quality.

The district was one which was called populous, yet on the whole length of about thirty miles of the proposed railway there was only one squatter, at whose hospitable mahogany we often sat. The life of these dwellers in the wilderness has no attraction for me, though some seem to enjoy it, and some of the wealthiest of them seem to have no recreation such as books, billiard tables, and such other means of obtaining it as is possible in the far country, nothing but the care of and thought for sheep all day. If you cannot talk sheep,

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you are out of it. Truly Shakespeare says that the shepherd's life is a vile life. Thinking of the general class of the squatters, among which there are many exceptions, however, the pregnant saying well applies, that any fool can make money, but that it takes a wise man to spend it.

Besides the squatter, there was a small farmer, or "Cockatoo" as such a one is locally called, in the district, whom I mention on account of a singular incident in reference to him. He could talk about some things besides sheep, and in conversation on the enjoyments of life, remarked to me that he would like to live a thousand years. That very night he was struck with paralysis and died within a week.

Our next move was to an up-country township to take charge of the construction of another line; and here I would remark that, having seen since a vast number of Australian country towns, the deadly, drab, dreary, dull similarity of one to the other I never saw equalled except in a sack of peas. At a later period, some of my duties involved fixing the site of new townships in the then uninhabitable Bush at suitable distances on projected railways, and as they were to be on the terrible chessboard plan, and would no doubt be built in the usual formal style, my artistic conscience must bear the weight of having assisted in the extension of such hideousness. The style consists of straight wide streets, flanked with brick barrack-like houses roofed with corrugated iron, with verandahs painted with yellow and red stripes covering the footways, and supported by posts at edge of the latter, the court house, banks and hotels being slightly more pretentious than the ordinary shops.

I had also sometimes to name the projected town, and in one case, some of the adjoining land belonging

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to a squatter named Lord, I proposed to recommend, in my report, the name for the township as "Lornoswair," in the hope that this very well-fitting, though disguised designation, would escape notice until the railway was made and opened, when the porter, shouting out the name, would probably for the first time cause its meaning to be realized. However, thinking that I had no right to prejudice the place in the ears of the future inhabitants, I forbore.

But to get back to my first experience of an up-country township, several of the inhabitants of the place and the squatters of the immediate neighbourhood, having called on us, we determined, in conjunction with another official, to give a fancy ball, hiring the town hall and adding some refreshment tents for the purpose. The costumes were fairly good, but the manners and customs were unsophisticated in the extreme. A large number never answered their invitations, but nevertheless came, and many, evidently expecting no one to receive them, rushed past us into the centre of the hall before we could attract their attention. The usher made some curious mistakes, such as announcing, in a loud voice, a Breton peasant as a British pheasant. The caterer, never having heard of claret cup, and mistaking instructions, issued it neat with strong additions of brandy, but no soda water, and a good many of the guests regarding this as the newest fashion from the old country, from which they knew we had recently come, said nothing about it, till the scattery condition of their talk and actions showed the real state of affairs.

One of the most curious sojourners in the village reminded me of that long but exceedingly wise proverb of the Japanese :

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He who knows not, and knows not that he knows not, is a fool.

Shun him!

He who knows not, and knows that he knows not, is humble.

Teach him!

He who knows, and knows not that he knows, is asleep.

Wake him!

He who knows, and knows that he knows, is a wise man.

Follow him!

It was the first of these lines which applied to the man in question, who, ignorant as he was, followed the occupation of a tutor. He took up on one occasion a copy of Cary's *Dante* from my table, and, speaking of the name of the poet as if it was in one syllable, said that it was his knowledge of Italian which enabled him to appreciate the work. But the first line of the proverb was better illustrated by a story he told us in which he gave himself away in an unusually liberal way. It appears that in New York he had been usher in a girls' school, the mix up of the sexes in educational matters in the States being a feature of their system. In this capacity he was put in charge of about a hundred nearly grown-up girls on an excursion to the seaside. They were as high-spirited and muscular as suffragettes, and he was "small and of no reputation," as the Psalmist says, so that when he gave an order that they did not like, they made a hole in the sand and put him into it, covering him with leaves and dancing upon him. All of which we could well believe.

At this time it became necessary, in order to complete an important link in the railway system of Australia, to build across the wide river estuary of the Hawkesbury, a bridge of such magnitude that it was, when completed, the largest work of the kind in the Southern Hemisphere, and it holds that supremacy still. One of its piers is sunk to a greater depth below water than any other in any part of the world. The bridge would take



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about three years to build, and the position of resident engineer in charge of the construction of the work was offered to me, and accepting it, I handed over my previous position to another, and moved to the site of the proposed bridge.

Its construction, which was carried out by American contractors, involved a great number of exciting incidents, which will be the subject of some of the following pages.

The situation of the bridge is one of great beauty, steep wooded shores and leafy islets surrounding it on every side, the river being noted as one of the beauty-spots of the island continent, and is largely visited. Many of the travellers who now daily pass over the enormous structure, the growth of which I had then to supervise, are asleep after a hot and dusty journey; others are indifferent, or are buried in the superior attractions of a shilling shocker; only a few look out and see the beautiful scenery which discloses itself as, in mid-air, the traveller crosses the estuary; while still fewer bestow a thought on the great mathematical research which was required to design the form and dimensions of this spider-like structure, any failure in which would drop the train and its occupants into the dark waters of the flood beneath. Nor do they think of the three years of hard work comprised in the erection, crowded with the vicissitudes and anxieties which beset all works of the kind. The passengers in a great ship like the giant Cunarders have something like a week in which they are continually brought to think of those who have toiled with brain and hand for their safety, comfort, and convenience, but even a long bridge is passed over in a couple of minutes at most, and there is an end of it to the traveller.

Of course, it is not only engineers and other con-

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structors of mechanical aids to civilization who are forgotten in this way. Many a great literary work is run over by its reader with as little attention to its construction as in the case of the mighty bridge, and without a thought of the labours of the writer who, apart from the brain power used up in its composition, has had probably much trouble and worry in hunting up and verifying his authorities. Libraries have had to be ransacked for statements, localities, dates, quotations, which many a thoughtless reader probably assumes are lying ready for use when called on in some odd corner of the author's brain.

Much thought and investigation had been given to the question as to where the estuary should be crossed, and eventually a point was chosen where the river was about four times the width of the Thames in London, the route of the railway being adjusted to this arrangement. It would be out of place to give in any detail a description of this great bridge, which I wrote in the *Transactions* of the Institution of Civil Engineers, London; but to understand the somewhat remarkable incidents which occurred during the erection of the work it is necessary to give a brief outline of the general design.

The lowest part of the structure is forty feet above high water, so as to allow small steamers and other vessels navigating the river to pass underneath. There are seven spans of steel-framed girders, 416 feet each, the piers to support them being of stone, above water, resting on concrete under water; and it was the fixing of this concrete that was one of the great difficulties of the undertaking, for there was 40 feet of water and 120 feet of soft mud to be got through before the hard bottom, necessary for the stability of the foundation, was reached.

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It was obviously impossible to dig down by divers to this depth or to make what is called a coffer-dam round the site of each pier and pump it dry, as is usual in foundations of a shallower depth. It was therefore determined, after much consideration, to construct on shore, for each of the six pier foundations, a great steel cylinder closed in at the bottom, to float it out to the site, and, by a method presently to be described, to sink it down to the bottom of the river, and further down through the mud to the hard bottom, by filling and weighting it with the concrete which was to form the foundation. The steel cylinder, or caisson as it is technically called, was only meant as a temporary casing for the concrete, and after it had fulfilled its purpose of holding the half-liquid concrete together during sinking might rust and decay in time, the hardened concrete remaining as the permanent support of the pier above. It was, however, clearly impossible to float out and sink a cylinder 150 feet high, which would be necessary for the completed work, so that it had to be made in short lengths, and as soon as the top of the first length was down to water-level, more steel plates were added, and continued to be added while the sinking was going on and until the bottom was reached.

To understand the shape of the caisson and the operation of sinking it, the reader should imagine for the bottom length a top hat without its crown and brim, and inside it three vertical tubes each about the diameter, proportionally to the hat, of a small coffee-cup. Unlike the cup, however, the tubes must be supposed to be bottomless and splaying out like a trumpet-mouth below, so as to meet the bottom edge of the hat, forming a sharp edge. Such, on a very large scale, was the bottom length, or shoe as it is called, of the caisson. This shoe was floated out slightly weighted with concrete, to the

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exact site of the pier for which it was destined, and from the hold of a ship anchored alongside, more concrete in a liquid state was poured into the space between the outside of the tubes and the sides of the caisson, the weight of this concrete causing the shoe to sink to the bottom of the river. This done, the next thing was to get the structure down through the mud, and in order to do this, the mud had to be got out of its way. It was for this purpose that the tubes were provided which, it will have been noted, were as yet not filled with the concrete which was all round them. Specially shaped dredging buckets, or grabs as they are called, were then let down inside the tubes, and from their peculiar action forced their massive jaws into the mud and drew it up by means of steam hoists, this going incessantly day and night concurrently with the concrete filling and weighting, until the great mass was sent down to its final resting-place, in one case 162 feet below the water-line. The tubes, which were, of course, built up simultaneously with the sides of the caisson, were then filled with concrete, so that there was a solid mass of this material from the hard bottom up to the water-level, upon which the stone piers above water were subsequently built. In this bridge, therefore, what is visible to the spectator, large as that is, is only about half of the entire structure, the other half being sunk under water.

The manœuvring and sinking of such an enormously weighty mass to its final true position, which was the task of the contractors, was a process requiring great engineering skill and resource, first, to tow it out successfully to its site, secondly, to get it into its true position before sinking, and thirdly, to guide it downwards in a truly vertical direction. Usually, the first of these three operations was the easiest, as favourable conditions of wind, currents, and tides could be chosen before the

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voyage was undertaken from the shore, nearly a mile away. But on one occasion, after starting, a high wind arose, and as the floating shoe exposed a large surface to its influence, the ordinary towing steamer and others brought up to help, were unable to prevent it being carried away towards the ocean. Wires were dispatched to the nearest port to send up more steamers, but meantime the wind moderated sufficiently to enable the caisson to be taken into a cove near the mouth of the river and secured by anchors and hawsers. Here she remained till wind and tide enabled successful navigation to the bridge site to be effected. Had the shoe been carried out to the ocean, it would have puzzled the ancient mariner himself if he had met it. Surely such a thing was never seen on land or sea, and whether it would have been reported upon as the great sea serpent seen at last, or the Flying Dutchman's phantom ship, it is hard to say. The complacent traveller now crossing the bridge in his comfortable car little knows that two hundred feet below him, and forming the base which supports him, is a craft which was once floating about at the mercy of the winds which nearly wrecked it.

The next operation, that of locating the shoe in its exact place before sinking, had to be done by a series of elaborate observations by instruments on shore and trigonometrical calculations of an intricate kind, direct measurements across such an expanse of water, of sufficient accuracy, being impossible. The importance of each pier being in its true place to an inch will be understood when it is remembered that the great girders, one thousand tons in weight and 410 feet long, were to be afterwards placed upon them, and if the ends of the girders did not fit into the bearings prepared for them on the top of the piers, owing to the latter being out of position, great complications in the work, heavy expense,

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and delay would have resulted. But even if the position of the caisson when at the bottom of the river were mathematically accurate, the sinking of it truly vertical so as to maintain the accuracy through over one hundred feet of mud was perhaps the most difficult work of all. There were six of these caissons to sink, and the anxiety involved in contriving the various devices to overcome the tendencies to deviate from the vertical was extreme. It must be remembered that the weight was so enormous that there was no chance of remedying any displacement by lifting the caisson and re-sinking.

But if this was anxious work, far more so was the placing upon the piers, when completed, the pairs of great girders which had, during the sinking of the piers, been put together on the shore. In ordinary cases the erection of such work as this would present no difficulty. A temporary wooden scaffolding or staging would be erected between the piers, and on this would be brought, piece by piece, the steel bars forming the girders, when they would be put together and the staging removed to another span. Here, however, owing to the depth of the water, the softness of the mud, and the strength of the current, this procedure was impossible. The plan adopted was to construct and float in shallow water adjoining the shore an immense pontoon of timber, somewhat less in length than a span of the bridge, and to erect on it a scaffolding up to the same height above low tide as the top of the bridge piers were over low water. This done, while still at the moorings along the shore, the girders were put together on the top of the scaffolding with their ends projecting. When this was complete, and when a favourable condition of wind and current existed, the great craft with its top-heavy load was towed out by a sufficient number of steamers to the span for which that

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particular pair of girders was destined. The operation was so timed that on arrival between the piers high water would occur. The whole construction would then gradually sink with the falling tide until the projecting ends of the girders rested in their places on the piers, and the pontoon and staging sinking further would become free from their great load and be towed back to shore to serve the same purpose for the other sets of girders—seven in all.

The towing out of the enormous and top-heavy structure in each of the seven cases was an operation requiring special skill and great readiness of resource, as a sudden change of wind might carry the whole out to sea or on to the rocky shore, and, in a very literal sense, there was no plain sailing. In one case, which would take up too much space to detail, a situation arose through the sudden shifting of the wind in which two equally risky alternatives for avoiding the apparently imminent destruction of the whole pontoon and its load presented themselves to the engineer in charge of the operation. A third course, however, suddenly struck the engineer which involved a rapid change of all the tackle, and notwithstanding the difficulties of giving unexpected orders in a high wind, the manœuvre succeeded and the craft was saved.

Perhaps the most exciting of all the many contingencies which occurred during the construction of the bridge was the adventure on the voyage of the span at the south end of the bridge. The site was, of course, close to the shore, and quite near to the latter were many sunken rocks. The pontoon with its load was successfully navigated to near the site, and all was going merrily as a wedding bell, when great delay occurred in trying to warp her round. The hitherto rising tide had begun to turn, and before the manœuvre

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was complete one end of the pontoon got aground on a sunken rock, the rest of it being in deep water. For many hours all efforts to draw her off failed—efforts stimulated by the possible serious consequences of failing to do so, for with the tide still falling the floating end would gradually sink more and more, the other end remaining stationary ; and unless the slope at low tide was still insufficient to cause it, the great girders of one thousand tons weight would slip off into the deep river. In such case they would be utterly lost, not only by smashing themselves to pieces, but by being sunk in one hundred feet of mud, and nothing that could be done would have held them back. Moreover, if the whole vessel with its load had slipped off, destruction would equally have occurred, as the top-heavy character of the loading was only suitable for quiet movement, and not for the violent plunge downwards into the water which this result would have caused. The loss in a moment of time would have been enormous, besides causing serious delay in the opening of the bridge. The engineers and contractors' representatives stood by on shore absolutely helpless, only trusting in the possibility of the tide turning before the steepness of the inclination of the girders would have been too much for their stability. Their hearts almost stood still as the time for low tide indicated by the almanac approached. The situation seemed desperate ; great creaks and groans were heard as if the mighty structure was straining all its muscles, so to speak, to save itself, when, just as it was thought that all was over, the witching time of low tide arrived, the crisis was passed, and the girders still held fast. A few inches less of water and the newspaper posters of the world would have been blazoned with the disaster. As the tide rose, the pontoon again lifted itself level, and



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when high water occurred she was afloat end to end, and was safely brought into position.

The engineers who had immediate charge of these operations were naturally Americans employed by the American contractors. I have had many dealings with English, Indian, French, Spanish, and American civil engineers, and for infinite resource in emergencies, for boldness of conception, for grasping successfully the skirts of happy chance, the latter seem to me to stand unrivalled. It is true that in America they have magnificent failures—such, for instance, as the recent one of the Quebec bridge; but for each of these they can show many great successes. It may be well said of nations, as it has been of individuals, that they who never make mistakes never do anything, and though it would be absurd to apply the latter to engineers of other nations, yet their fear of making mistakes too often leads them, if not to nothing, at all events to a second place in the great race of engineering progress. Great engineering works outside America are doubtless carried out with solid and enduring success; but they are usually a steady advance on something already achieved by previous gradual progress, seldom a new departure.

Some of the Americans who were associated with the bridge works, had that peculiar Yankee gift, not especially of humour, but of humorous expression. For instance, one of them, hearing the wife of one of the staff saying that she was a physiognomist and could read, fairly accurately, people's moods and ideas from their faces, said to her husband, "Guess you try to arrange your coun'nance some, when you come home of an evenin'."

A man visiting the works from up-country, saying that the chief things wanted in his township out west were a good supply of water and some decent

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society, was answered, "So? Vur like hell seems to me your place, sure."

These remind me of a much later episode, when a friend of mine walking down Piccadilly accidentally trod on the skirt of a gloriously attired lady, who before apology could be made, turned round and said in the accents of the West, "An' whar are ye slingin' your hoofs to?"

Two startling events not specially connected with the bridge occurred in its neighbourhood during its construction—a fearful railway accident and a hurricane.

As to the first, the river scenery was beautiful, and it was a favourite excursion ground on the numerous Bank Holidays in which the Australian indulges himself. Not only does he take all the usual English ones, shutting up shop completely on all of them, but adds several, such as New Year's Day, the anniversary of the establishment of his particular colony, that of Australia, the King's birthday, the Prince of Wales's birthday, Good Friday, Easter Eve, and what is called Eight Hours Day, which is the anniversary of the establishment of eight hours as a legal day's work for manual workers. Besides these, the Government offices close for half a day on the numerous occasions when there is a great race or cricket match going on in the neighbourhood. But the railway accident of which I am about to speak was on a holiday outside of all these—the late Queen's Jubilee.

The country all about was hilly, and the railway for five or six miles approaching the river was on a steep down grade to the small station on its bank, overlooking which, and close by, was our wooden house. The line was a single one doubling out into two tracks at the station, and a little beyond the latter was the wide and deep river, as yet unbridged. A little after midday,



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while we were at lunch, a queer rapidly increasing sound with loud steam whistles in rapid succession was heard, and rushing out, we saw a terrible sight. Down the steep grade at a fearful pace, apparently eighty or ninety miles an hour, came a long excursion train full of passengers, the driver of which had clearly lost control of the brakes. Unless stopped, the whole train with its living load was bound to run over the end of the rails beyond the station into the river. But a hardly less frightful contingency was inevitable, for two trains stood in the way—one a train full of passengers waiting for the arrival of the expected one in order to start back, and the other a train of empty trucks on the second track but some distance beyond the station, and close to the water's edge. The pointsman whose duty it was to turn the ordinarily slowed-up approaching train into the line on which, further down, the empty trucks stood, manfully stuck to his post, though the train, swaying from side to side at its excessive speed, was not unlikely to leave the rails at this spot, the line curving abruptly to one side. Though standing only about a yard from the train, he held firmly to his lever, till every carriage passed him. Had he failed, the slaughter which immediately followed would have been at least doubled, for then the runaway train would have crashed into the standing one which was full of people. However, there lay beyond the empty trucks, and to our horror the train, with all its living freight, smashed into them, the engine turning a sort of somersault and plunging into the river, while the carriages heaped themselves one over another and telescoped, the awful screams of the unfortunate passengers being hardly drowned in the explosions of the gas reservoirs under the carriages. An inspector of mine who was on the engine was waving his handkerchief as a farewell as he

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passed, knowing, no doubt, his doom. Eight people, including him, were killed on the spot, and a great many severely injured, many for life.

It was the work of a moment to rush down to the station and give what help I could, and I soon found my vocation, which was to stand against the door of the telegraph office restraining the rush of the passengers who had escaped severe injuries and who wanted, naturally, to telegraph their safety to their relations and friends. These I had to let in one by one; but the telegraph clerk, totally unnerved by the calamity, broke down and was unable to work his fingers. Fortunately, one of the passengers, though actually in the accident, was equal to the occasion, and having the necessary knowledge, took up his duties. Meantime, the whole of the little community connected with the bridge works was employed in trying to extricate the victims and in carrying them away to temporary shelter, some of them screaming with pain, while others were past this stage, either dead or in a state of collapse. Strange to say, there were many altogether unhurt. There was no medical aid within thirty or forty miles, and the sufferings of the injured must have been great. The memory of this fearful scene will never leave me.

The other event was the hurricane which nearly blew us to "smithereens." Our wooden house stood on the top of a hill commanding a lovely view, but being highly exposed, was more suited for that purpose than for resisting a storm. Moreover, large trees stood all around us, which were rather a danger than a shelter, for like most Australian trees their trunks were bare, and if blown down would crush our little dwelling as if it were an empty match-box. There were warnings, however, of the coming storm, and I had time to have strong wire ropes connecting the middle of the trees to

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windward with the bases of those further off. Then all the doors and windows on that side had to be secured much more strongly than their fastenings could effect, for if one of these blew open the wind would get in and lift the roof off. Hence all the heavy boxes, desks, and heavy furniture had to be piled up against the closed doors and windows.

While this was going on, the wind began to surge and howl. "The voice of His thunder was heard round about: the lightnings shone upon the ground, the earth was moved, and shook withal." Soon the walls to windward bent inwards like so much cardboard, but did not give way, while the corrugated iron roof, though holding on, was so displaced that the rain poured in so that we had to make successive movements to keep dry. This condition did not last long, however, as regards the floor, which was rapidly becoming covered with water, driving us to standing on tables and other things which were not used for the barricading. I happened to have some augers in the house, however, and we proceeded to relieve the situation by boring as many holes in the floor as we could, by which we hastened much the running off of the water. One extraordinary feature of this wind was its sudden cessation in the course of a minute to a dead calm—a most weird effect.

The damage done by this storm all along the coast, even to stone and brick houses, will long be remembered, so that we thought that in our temporary wooden hut, we got through it wonderfully well.

We had many notable visitors to the bridge, including engineers from England and the sister colonies, and from New Zealand. Also the late Earl of Carnarvon, who had been Secretary of State for the Colonies, and whose cultivated conversation, as I took him about in my steam launch, I well remember enjoying. We

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talked Ruskin and about what he—then still alive—would have thought of our spoiling the beautiful scenery all around us with hideous railway cuttings, and the monstrous red steel skeleton of the great bridge stretching from the green wooded groves of the picturesque Long Island to those of the northern shore.

Another visitor was the present Lord Brassey, who would naturally look upon the scene with other eyes, being the son of the well-known railway contractor.

The bridge was opened by the Governor of the colony, Lord Carrington, in the presence of about eight hundred guests from all the colonies, and at the inevitable banquet which followed, speeches were made buttering, on both sides, politicians whose share in the work was infinitesimal, and never mentioning anyone who had anything to do with its construction. A stranger hearing them might think that the bridge rose ready-made like Venus from the froth of the sea, or that it required as little preparation for the work as is supposed necessary for the duties of a Member of Parliament.



## CHAPTER XVII

The scrub—A brain wave—Floods—A drunken deputation—The magistrate's crime—An ingenious election dodge—Unintentional jokes—A drought—Australian hospitality—Colonial M.P.'s—Outlaws—Irreverence—Anecdotes—Tasmania the guileless—Mount Wellington—The strawberry church—The Melbourne Cup—Stories—The Jenolan Caves—The Blue Mountains and Robert Louis Stevenson—A curious proposal of marriage.

**T**HE great bridge being finished, I was engaged for the few years following in bush or scrub work, largely in the saddle, in investigating the necessity for, and the routes of, various proposed railways, and later, when promoted to a position immediately under the Engineer-in-Chief, in superintending the location and construction of the whole of them.

I distinguish between bush and scrub. The former is that which spreads over the most of Australia, where the trees are never so close that the bush cannot easily be ridden through, and even driven through, by tracks which are gently sinuous so as to avoid the trunks. Scrub, on the other hand, is dense forest, through which it is difficult even to walk. The ordinary traveller gets through this country by roads or bridle-paths which are cut through it, but the exploring engineer must keep for the most part to his route on foot with an axeman to clear his way. Even with the latter he gets caught and entangled with the dense vegetation of the sub-tropical north, where the scrub prevails.

There is a wire-like creeper full of small spikes which hangs across from tree to tree nearly everywhere, and

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which catches hold of and binds one as a cobweb entangles a fly, so that when so caught there often arises a great rivalry between the heat of one's body and that of one's language. These creepers are called in Australia "lawyers," why I do not know, for they bleed you, get round your legs and arms, and as soon as you free yourself from one entanglement you find yourself in another. It is a libel on an honourable, if lucrative, profession, as it is well known that such things are unheard of in dealing with its members.

There is another parasite in the scrub which has much more grateful functions. It is a long tube-like structure about two inches in diameter hanging in graceful festoons from tree to tree. I forget its name. Its peculiarity is that if it is cut through with an axe a deliciously cool stream of pure water runs out as from a broken water-pipe, a glorious refreshment to the tired struggler through the scrub. How the water gets there and how it keeps cool under a burning sun is hard to understand; the pity of it is that the scrub in which it is found is always in a well-watered part of Australia near the coast, not in the dry, parched-up west, where the water would be of so much more value.

Another plant whose habitat is in the scrub is the stinging tree, a most innocent-looking growth with a leaf something like that of a laurel, with nothing distinctive about it to warn the explorer, yet a touch of this harmless-looking leaf stings like a combination of hundreds of nettles, making him scream with pain. Curious to say, though protected by his coat, a horse suffers far more than a man from contact with this venomous plant.

It was while riding through country which was partly scrubby that the sole instance, in my comparatively long life, of the result of what is called a brain wave

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occurred. I had ridden far in a very hot sun, and suddenly got so faint and giddy from the effects of a slight touch of it, that I had to dismount and rest under a tree for about an hour. The man who was with me got a large leaf from the scrub and put it over my head and under my hat, this being one of the best protections against sunstroke, and I was thus enabled, with the declining sun, to mount and ride to the township which was to be my quarters for the night. Judge of my surprise when a telegram from my wife at headquarters, about four hundred miles away, was handed to me, bearing the words, "Is anything wrong? Wire at once." No intimation of any mishap could possibly have reached her. It cannot be explained otherwise than by brain wave. The curious part of this was that I was not in the least liable to be affected by the sun, even in India, where its force is so much greater, so that no fear or expectation of such an incident could have influenced the message.

One of the first journeys of this kind was about six hundred and forty miles in length, in the saddle, when I was much delayed by floods which spread over miles of country. I was about half-way through when the numerous rivers began to rise, owing to heavy rains in the adjoining range of mountains. One evening I could hardly get to the little inn which was to be my shelter for the night, the water nearly reaching to the saddle-girths. The principal danger was that of the horse getting into holes or depressions which, of course, he could not see.

In this inn, which stood on a rising ground above the flood-level, I had to spend an idle week, cut off by the flood which spread for many miles around. Fortunately, there were sufficient provisions in stock, for the people of these parts never know when they

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may be in want of them, owing to this cause. I had to go to the stable in a boat when looking after my horse's comfort.

This flood reminds me of a story told me of a lady new to Bush life, at an up-country station, whose husband was away, looking after his sheep. He had forded a river which rose before he returned in the afternoon. The wife, anxious about his being late, rode out to an eminence to get a view, when she saw approaching at some distance a man almost divested of all clothing, gesticulating and shouting. Riding back at speed to the homestead, she ordered men out to seize the maniac, as she thought him to be, but he turned out to be her husband. In Australia it is a common practice when crossing a river in flood for a man to take off his clothes and strap them to his horse's saddle; then horse and man swim across side by side, when, on reaching the shore, the man reclothes himself and mounts. On this occasion, however, whether by accident or owing to the horse having a sense of humour in playing a trick on his master, the animal escaped with the clothes. Hence the situation.

I had hardly gone a few days more on my journey after the subsidence of the waters, when reaching a large coast town, the river on the banks of which it stands rose in its might, and the town was flooded, all traffic in the streets being stopped except by boating. The gasworks being flooded, there was no light except that afforded by candles and a few oil lamps, and the inhabitants had to live for several days in their upper stories, those who had these giving shelter to others whose houses had only ground-floor rooms. Mails were also stopped. To show how emergency will bring out character, a bank clerk boarding at the hotel, as these officials often do in Australian country

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towns, went nearly out of his mind for fear of being drowned, though there was really no danger whatever.

This flood delayed me nearly another week, and I came to the conclusion that, except red tape and whisky, there are few things more harassing to the progress of engineering science than too much water all at once. Talking of whisky in this connection, I must relate what happened to me on a subsequent occasion.

I had to fix the course of a new railway, and with it the sites for stations in the towns passed through. Coming to one of these, the mayor called on me and asked if I would receive a deputation that evening of the leading citizens, so that I should hear their views as to the site to be fixed upon. Agreeing to this, a large room in the hotel was secured, and at the time when the deputation was due I waited for a long time, but, no one arriving, I went to bed at last. Next morning his Worship appeared and explained the matter without a smile on his face. It appeared that fourteen citizens had collected at a neighbouring hotel some time before they were to come to me, in order to discuss how the matter should be placed before me. Drinks were ordered, and I may say that, in Australia, when one in a company stands a drink all round, it is *de rigueur* that the others should do the same, this being locally called "shouting." Thirteen drinks, therefore, or thereabouts, followed, and when the time arrived for the deputation to see me, eleven out of the fourteen had become incapable of stating their views in an intelligible manner. Hence the mayor thought that he and two others, who had been either more moderate or were better examples of the survival of the fittest, were not sufficient in number to impress me as a representative body, so the deputation fell through—possibly literally so as regards part of it. The leading citizens

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never appeared, so the site had to be fixed without their assistance. It has been said, in reference to the acts of a Ministry, that ten wise men can easily add up into one fool, but if so, what is the sum arrived at by adding up eleven fools ?

I had, in the course of my country investigations, to do a good deal in the way of deputation receiving, and fairly soon became quite an adept at acquiring from them a good deal of information while imparting none to them of any moment.

I think that it was at the same town that the following happened during my visit. Land agents, petty tradesmen, cattle dealers, and many of similar occupations, are often made magistrates in the country parts, often in exchange for political services to the Government which appoints them. There is a law in the colony against card-playing in public-houses after midnight, and it happened that the police surprised a party of offenders and arrested all of them but one, he being the magistrate before whom they duly had to appear in the morning. Quite unembarrassed by the awkwardness of the situation, he gravely commented on the seriousness of the offence, and let his late companions off with a caution.

I spoke just now of floods. The noted one of the Darling River in the north-west of the colony in 1893 will not be easily forgotten. Latterly our light railways in New South Wales were purposely constructed level with the surface of the plains, so that a severe flood from any neighbouring river might rise above them without washing them away, the running of trains in that case being simply stopped till the waters subsided. As on many of these branch lines the traffic was so small that there was only one train each way about three times a week, no great inconvenience resulted. The earlier lines were, however, constructed sufficiently high to overtop possible

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floods, and in 1893 the Bourke Railway, which was of this character, extended through flooded country for hundreds of miles across the western plains.

The Darling River on this occasion so overflowed that it became virtually some sixty miles wide, the passengers in the trains being often out of sight of land on one or the other side of them. This, of course, would be impossible in a country which was not as level as a billiard table. An illustration of this is found in the fact that, with one exception, on the plains of Argentina, the railway to Bourke has the longest stretch of uninterrupted straight line in the world. This straight extends for about 124 miles.

It must not be supposed that all my earlier career in Australia was in the country parts, though much of it was. In fact, I have seen more of the State in which I lived than most of its natives have had the opportunity of visiting. By the way, the word "native" is used in Australia not to denote the blacks, who are almost extinct except in Queensland, but white men born in the colonies, as distinct from immigrants. The blacks are called Aborigines. Much, however, of my time was spent at head-quarters and in the capitals of the neighbouring States in connection with inter-colonial railway affairs. Lengthened periods were occupied at the former between the country and inter-colonial trips, these latter becoming less frequent as, advancing in the service ultimately to the position next to the chief of my department, the head office became the chief seat of my duties.

One leave of absence was spent in the altogether delightful climate of Tasmania, where so many of those fagged out by the summer heats of Australia go to recruit their energies.

For convenience sake, however, I group together the

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following occurrences in the country, though they were scattered over nearly the whole of my stay in Australia.

Politics are everywhere becoming such a low-down game, that I almost hesitate to relate an incident that may serve as an example how a candidate for parliament can dodge himself in on a minority of votes. In the course of my travels, at an up-country election, where the constituency was large in area, but with a very scattered population, an ingenious would-be legislator, whom the majority did not want, nevertheless got in in this way. His name was, let us say, Blackstone, and that of his opponent T. Jones, the latter being very popular and sure to succeed unless some scheme were devised to prevent him doing so. Blackstone, therefore, just before the nomination, induced, or possibly bribed, one of the numerous other Joneses in the country to be nominated. The greater portion of the electors, who were widely scattered, knew nothing of the second Jones' candidature, hearing only of the two rivals, Jones and Blackstone. When, therefore, the names of T. Jones and C. Jones appeared with that of Blackstone on the ballot papers, many of those who wanted T. Jones, voted in error for C. Jones, not noticing the nomination, or perhaps not knowing the initials of their favourite, so the Jones vote being thus divided, Blackstone sailed in at the head of the poll.

Unintentional jokes are sometimes perpetrated, and one I came across in a country township sets me thinking of others in my varied career. This was by two individuals who joined in a partnership as, curious to say, drapers, their names being respectively Adam and Eve.

Very many years ago, in London, I remember that a clergyman named Tooth got into trouble, and also into



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the ecclesiastical courts, for making use in his church of the ritual, to which everyone is accustomed in these days. A preacher in a sermon at the time, speaking of the case, which attracted much public attention, said : "I need not mention the minister's name, it is in everyone's mouth."

Talking of the fitting name to occupations, I remember in London, years ago, Messrs. Death and Coffin, who were doctors, and in a colonial town, Muddle, a solicitor. Surely these had to live down their names.

One of the most violent contrasts in my experience was perhaps that between the sight of the magnificent teeming luxuriance of the tropical jungle on the Malabar coast of India, and the scenes of drought which I was destined to see in the inland districts of Australia. The vast brown expanse of the "famine-murdered land," bare of all vegetation, with its stunted tree stems and the skeletons of rabbits lying about in millions, dead after gnawing the bark of the trees which they had destroyed, was terrible to see. I recall almost riding over a gaunt sheep much of the form of a greyhound, unable to run, and its falling over a rut in the ground, and being too weak to rise again. At this time the dry, hot, exhausting west wind sweeps the plain, scorching the skin. Shelley would have penned a different ode to the west wind had he been to Australia.

In some of these dry districts water has been procured from artesian wells, which, though hardly sufficient to irrigate the land, is often enough to save men and animals from the fearful death of thirst. The water springs up in a fountain from four thousand or five thousand feet below the surface, and is often very hot. I remember bathing in a pool fed by this water which was at a temperature of 110 degrees. The surrounding

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air at that particular season, being quite as high, it could well be borne, but in winter it would be difficult to stand it. The water, however, soon cools on exposure to the ordinary temperature.

I was never actually seriously lost in the Bush, or "bushed" as it is called, though I ought to have been, to make these memories properly thrilling; but it is a very easy thing to do, especially in flat country, without compass or the sun, which, fortunately from this point of view, seldom deserts one in Australia. It is difficult to keep a straight course, for having to clear trees and stumps direction is lost, and it is also well known that both men and horses tend unconsciously to the left, the right legs, as a rule, being more vigorous than the left. In the absence of sun, the experienced bushman can always find his bearings, except in the very dry country, by examining the tree trunks, moss forming on them on the side from which the prevailing winds and rains blow. This is an infallible guide where it exists.

Whether temporarily lost or not, the unfailing hospitality of the Australian forms a grateful ending to a long ride or drive in the Bush. I do not want to underrate its sincerity or thoroughness in the least, when I say that existence there could hardly go on without it. It is a necessity of the country. There are some half-way houses or roadside inns in the more inhabited districts, but, as a rule, there are no hotels except in the towns, which are often much further apart than a day's journey. Hence the hospitality of a squatter's or settler's home is a necessity. It has often been my lot to reach one of these late in the evening, to find the owner, and sometimes the family also, away from home. This makes no difference, the servants see to your wants and put you up for the night. In some of the very large stations there are three sets of

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buildings. Spare rooms in the squatter's own house for travellers, generally expected, who are of his own social rank. Another building for commercial travellers, and a set of barracks for tramps and shearers on their several journeys, but all alike enjoying the free hospitality of the host.

Members of Parliament are often met with on up-country journeys—and in the old days a peculiar race in the colonies. There were among them, of course, many able and cultivated men, but that there were any at all of the latter kind is wonderful, owing to the great majority of the electors who chose them being, under universal suffrage, necessarily the most ignorant of the people. The few incidents I shall have to relate in illustration of these facts were entirely due to this degradation, which has now to a great extent, owing to the advance of education, passed away. The author of *Hudibras*, nearly three centuries ago, wrote of one of these results—

“And by the greatness of his noise,  
Prov'd fittest for his country's choice.”

So that the talkers possessing *vox et preterea nihil* were often those who won at elections. Wind-baggery was supreme, and in thinking of them one can well imagine that the sailors of Ulysses had returned to their evil work on earth and opened anew the wind-bags of Æolus. As members were paid, the occupation in those days was largely looked upon as a livelihood which required no qualification except the possession of a good pair of lungs. I remember hearing a candidate addressing a crowd from the balcony of an hotel when I was over a mile away. Shakespeare, slightly altered, says, “Three hundred pounds a year and possibilities is good gifts.” Among the members' possibilities was free railway travelling over the whole colony, and as some of them were land or

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mining agents or belonging to other callings necessitating travelling, their working expenses were thus a good deal reduced.

Cabinet ministers are, of course, drawn from all classes of members, as the whirligig of party goes round, and I recall a story of a Minister of Public Instruction visiting a country school. The schoolmaster happened, just by chance, to lay his hand on a rather high desk while saying to the Minister, "I think, Mr. J——, that the curriculum is rather high." The latter replied, "And why the d——I don't you get a saw and cut the legs shorter?"

Another education minister said, in a speech which I remember reading, that he thought history unnecessary for education. At all events, it need not go back beyond the present generation, say the American War of thirty years ago. He would not have agreed with Cicero, who wrote, *Nescire autem quid antea, quam natus sis, acciderit, id est semper esse puerum.*

The blacks are not numerous now in Australia and they are generally quite harmless, living in camps and supported by the Government. But within the time of which I write there existed a gang of them in the western county which raided some of the smaller settlers, and one or two murders were committed. The delinquents were very clever at escaping in the Bush, and bodies of mounted police, for many months, failed to arrest them. Under these circumstances the Government proclaimed them as outlaws, which enabled those other than police to arrest and even shoot them if they got the chance.

Ultimately, however, the police arrested a ringleader, who was placed on his trial for murder. The case was called with witnesses to prove the crime, and everything was going apparently smooth in the way of justice, when

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the prisoner's advocate pointed out that the man being an outlaw—that is, outside the law—he could not be tried by law. He admitted, of course, that the judge, or indeed anyone present in court, could lawfully shoot the prisoner there and then, but no other course could be taken. As of course nobody present was armed, and even if so, was not likely to take upon himself the responsibility of shooting the prisoner, he was set free. I forget whether the outlawry was cancelled and the prisoner rearrested, but it was a curious incident and is worth relation.

The absence of the feeling of reverence is natural in Australia, and, therefore, when I give instances of some of it up-country, it is to be quite understood that I know good reason is to be found for it. The natural increase of the population is such that the native-born form the vast majority of the white inhabitants. For them, as regards their own fair land, there is no history to speak of, no venerable institutions of the growth of centuries exist, and the only ruins they have ever seen are the dilapidated prodigal sons which the Fatherland so often sends out to them to drink and to starve, or, perhaps worse, to marry and propagate; not picturesque ruins by any means, and unfortunately, like some others, incapable of effective restoration. These gentlemen seldom return to the fatted calf at home, nor do they get it abroad, and they remain illustrations of the cruelty done to themselves and to the colony which receives them.

Hence there is little of that reverence which seems to come so naturally to a country with a history behind it. Though such things are much improved since I first landed, I remember being surprised at the talking and laughing, in a scarcely modulated tone, in an Anglican church; and I once saw a vicar himself passing round,

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shaking hands and chatting with his friends in the pews, immediately before he went up to begin the service. These, to us, irreverent doings, are however a matter of custom of the time, as both Pepys and Addison speak of similar behaviour as the ordinary fashions of their periods.

I recall seeing a man sleeping at full length on one of the seats of a metropolitan cathedral during service, without any notice being taken, and in the same church the collection plates had a network over them ; whether to protect the contents from abstraction I do not know, but it had that appearance.

At a provincial cathedral I saw canvas nailed across the east window lights instead of their being glazed, owing to want of money to spare, in a prosperous city, for more suitable material.

At a weekday service in one of the chief churches in Sydney I saw a man enter with a small parcel and attempt to hand it to the vicar, who was in the pulpit preaching. It appeared that he had to leave, at the vicarage, a parcel to be paid for on delivery, and on being told there that the vicar was at the church, thought it the most natural thing in the world to go to him there and get his money. The surroundings did not affect him in the least ; possibly he had never been inside a church before, or, it being a weekday, Divine Service was to him unthinkable except on Sunday.

Nor was there much reverence at first sight in the remark I heard by one who had just been to church, that the Bishop who preached had come down from the pulpit head over heels, which, indeed, when one comes to think of it, not only this prelate, but every preacher does, after the delivery of his sermon.

In my travels, some of which were along the coast by sea, I came across some queer incidents, either

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directly or at second hand. In one case, a well-known man had embezzled a large sum of money, escaping by one of the coasting steamers disguised as a Roman Catholic priest. The voyage included a Friday, and the supposed ecclesiastic raised suspicion, which ultimately led to his arrest, by selecting at dinner beefsteak instead of fish.

In another voyage a cattle dealer was taking a number of sheep with him which were accommodated on deck. The dealer had rather a hasty temper, and when one of the rams began butting him, he got into a rage, and taking him by the horns, threw him over into the sea, forgetting for the moment the propensity of these animals to follow one another. To his amazement and mortification, one by one, all his sheep followed, jumping over the gunwale, and all his efforts to prevent them were unavailing, and the whole flock was lost. This was told me by a rough, ignorant seaman, who could hardly have read Rabelais, yet I found, later, an almost exact version of this story in the works of that humorous writer. Whether the narrator had read it and thought that he would make a traveller's tale of it, or it was pure coincidence, it is equally remarkable.

Tasmania, the unspoilt and the guileless, is one of the gardens of the earth, and is often, from its delicious climate and beautiful scenery, the holiday haunt of the jaded Australian, as it was of mine in one hot season. Mount Wellington, which overtops and seems to stand as a grim sentinel over Hobart, the capital, is one of the most magnificent mountains I have seen. In the twilight, which is practically absent in Australia, its rugged sides towards the town have a colour to which I know no parallel elsewhere. That of the leaf of the beetroot is perhaps the only comparison which I can

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think of—an imperial purple. Sardanapalus, in all his magnificence, was not robed like this. A friend, the vicar of a parish nestling at its foot, told me that he came out of his house frequently as the day declined and talked to it. The feeling of “the strength of the hills which is His” is abundantly with one in the awful presence of this wonderful mountain, massive and rugged, and alone.

Then at the lower levels,

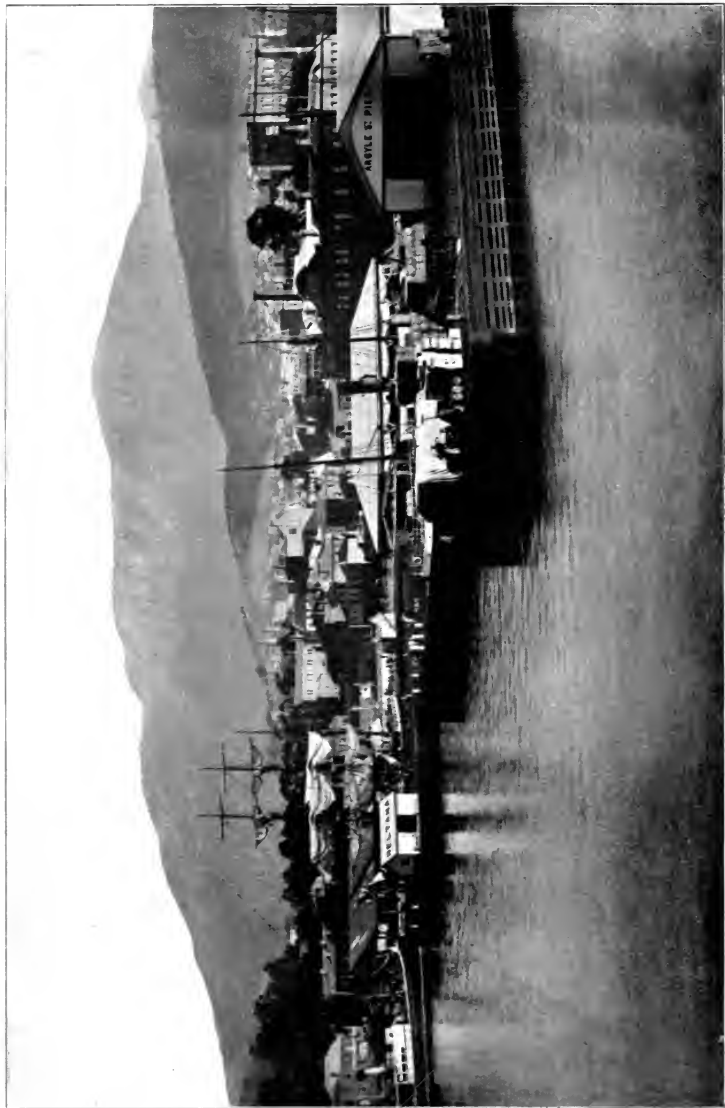
“Droops the heavy-blossom’d bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree,  
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark purple spheres of sea.”

It is the land of flowers and fruit. They contend for mastery everywhere from the smallest cottage gardens to that of the lordly pleasure house, lying in rich clusters, and climbing and covering up every grey wall and paling, with all the colours of the floral world. Then as to fruit, the homeward-bound mail steamers travel hundreds of miles out of their course in the proper season to load up tons of apples, pears, and other fruits for the old country. There is a building near Hobart called the Strawberry Church, which is said to have been built of strawberries, for the fund from which it was erected was solely raised by the sale of that fruit.

Tasmania I have spoken of as guileless, and whether it is in a sort of gratitude for the blessings Nature has bestowed upon them or not, the people are noted for having no serious crime among them, and they often leave their homes unguarded for hours with unlocked doors without even the suspicion of robbery.

A contrast, not far off, to this arcadian simplicity is the week in Melbourne of the Melbourne Cup, which attracts all the rascaldom as well as the numerous horse lovers of Australia. Coming from Western Australia





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once, just before this time, I found the mail steamer boarded at Freemantle by as choice a set of scoundrels as could be fitted into one ship. They, or their friends ashore, stole thirteen deck chairs from the ordinary passengers, and even took the blankets from the berths. At Melbourne, where we stayed at one of the leading hotels, a notice appeared on the bedroom walls warning guests not to leave their boots outside the door, but to ring and give them personally to an hotel servant ; also to take all their jewellery and valuables with them to the bathroom when going there. Coming up to bed at this hotel, after dining with a friend in the suburbs, I found, lying across my bedroom doorway, a man hopelessly drunk, whom I had to step over in order to enter. And yet with all this the immense crowd at the race meeting was most orderly, certainly more so than would be an English one on a similar occasion.

Needless to say, the gambling on "the Cup" is on a stupendous scale, and is spread over the whole of Australia. Lotteries are established in which the winner of a lucky number bought for £1 may win £30,000—a poor Chinaman in Thursday Island carrying off this sum on one occasion, and a labourer on one of the railways in Queensland on another. In both cases, I believe, the money was squandered and dissipated in a very short time. I remember a story of a man who, dreaming, saw in letters of fire above him the figure 66, and, regarding this as a portent, immediately next day sought out the purchaser of the ticket bearing that number for the approaching race lottery and paid him a good premium on the original price. No. 99 won, and then he remembered, with pangs of genuine remorse, that, being very drunk indeed on the night of the dream, his boon companions had carried him to bed and laid him carelessly with his head at the foot of the

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bed and his feet at the head, so that he saw the figures upside down. Otherwise all had been well.

Stimulated by the comparative wealth of the manual working classes in Australia, the gambling propensity is widespread. People in tramcars will bet with each other on the sum of the figures forming the number of the tickets to be given them by the conductor, and I remember seeing two street boys betting shillings on whether a cart, which was used for laying street material, would pass or not a certain lamp-post before tipping its load.

The Jenolan Caves in New South Wales are much visited by tourists from far and wide. I believe that they are unequalled in all the world for beauty and extent. The stalactites and stalagmites form themselves into fairy palaces, jewelled caskets, richly patterned folded shawls, and other forms of the utmost delicacy of shape and colour. Almost every conceivable shape in nature is simulated, and, lighted up by the electric and magnesium light of the attendants, the sight is one which a traveller might go far to see.

The caves are reached from the Blue Mountain district whose cool breezes rival those of Tasmania, being likewise a summer retreat of the workers in the plains. We were staying at the time in lodgings in the mountains which had just previously been occupied by Robert Louis Stevenson, of whose ways and eccentricities we heard not a little.

The Blue Mountains are full of beautiful scenery on the grand scale, the enormous heights and distances of the mountains and depths of the valleys making one forget the monotonous foliage. The tourist resorts are on the top of a ridge trending westward, down the sides of which there are picturesque ravines and countless waterfalls mostly falling in graceful leaps from

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ledge to ledge of fern-haunted rocks. At one cascade, "Govett's Leap," however, the water leaps over a cliff one thousand feet high in one spring, and, as a body of water, never reaches the bottom, as before reaching it it breaks into a cloud of spray sparkling with rainbows in the sunshine.

In one of my travels—I think at Brisbane—I had the unusual experience of being a witness to a proposal of marriage, which I suppose has not been the fortune of one in a thousand of the novel writers who describe them so freely. The Australian hotels all have drinking bars, through or near which all the guests must pass in entering or leaving. As I did so one morning, a young man, evidently a prosperous settler from the Bush, was hanging over the bar counter holding tight the hand of the barmaid, and was telling her of the beautiful farm he possessed with so many cattle, and how he could provide for her, if she agreed to accept him. There was no embarrassment at my entry; he still went on, and I fancy the girl was favourable, for the hand was not withdrawn as I passed on. So far as I heard, except for the little matter of the hand, worldly circumstances only came into the question, so the scene would not serve as a basis for a novel.

## CHAPTER XVIII

Horses I have known—In Ireland—In India—An attack by rats—Instances of horses' eccentricities and humour—Horses in Spain and in Australia—Camels—Colonial parliaments—A double gas bill—Tales—The Master of Iniquity—Stewed oysters and the shark—Lectures on the Liturgy—An amusing coincidence—The shortened sermon—Elected President of the Royal Society of New South Wales—University and other lectures.

THE incidents related in the previous chapter occurred chiefly in the country parts, and the time had now arrived when, on assuming the more responsible position already referred to, my time was largely, though not entirely, spent in Sydney. It was also then when the altered nature of my duties practically necessitated giving up riding, and concluding that part of my career which was so largely spent in the saddle.

The faithful animals which carried me through so many dangers and difficulties, and in some cases even saved my life, must not be forgotten. If I have not particularized them in speaking of the hunting fields of Ireland, the hot jungles of India, the dusty plains of South Africa, the hills of Spain and the Australian bush, it is because I considered that the many noble beasts of which I have been astride were worthy of a separate notice to themselves.

Well do I remember, though now sixty years ago, my first equine acquaintance, a small but terribly wilful Shetland pony, given to my father for the enjoyment of his boys on condition that, should there be no further

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use for him, he should be returned, and not sold or parted with to another. We boys rode him, and "Oh! what a falling off was there" on many an occasion; and yet when petted he was as mild as a temperance drink—in fact, in the town house he used to be led upstairs to the upper rooms. In the country we made a cart for him, all constructed, except for the wheels, by ourselves, and with some rope for harness tied him on. This was too much, however, it being the first time the animal had ever been in harness if it might be so called, so off he set at full gallop to try and get away from the cart, which was full of boys. It swayed about over ruts and stones so that, one by one, we fell out, and the road was strewn with boys in a long line. Eventually the trap capsized, and a period of seclusion from active life followed for some of us. I forget whether it was this escapade or some other which led to the pony being returned with thanks.

Besides this diminutive specimen, the only horse kept at home at this time was a noble upstanding bay, a brougham horse, which, for some unaccountable reason, was called Pickwick, Dickens' tale of that hero being then greatly read—unaccountable, for Mr. Pickwick was short and stout and generally, as regards outward appearance, ridiculous, while our Pickwick was proud and almost painfully dignified and austere. I can imagine, had he lived in these latter days, the utter contempt with which he would have regarded a motor-car. A kind Providence, however, took him away before he could suffer the indignity of being passed from behind by a monstrous machine driven by a begoggled demon, and adding insult to injury by leaving under his noble nose a vile and unmannerly smell.

I do not remember much about my mounts in the

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country parts of Ireland in the course of business, except a free-going chestnut that must have been a good one to enable me to hunt with the Kilkenny hounds two or three times a month, in addition to his almost daily duties of inspecting the works under my charge.

In India I kept several horses, as many as three at a time. Those imported from Australia—Walers, as they are called—though hardy enough in their own country, where I met them later, do not stand the Indian climate well, and are not much used in the jungle. The Arab is the most reliable and has the most staying power, also possessing good temper in a marked degree; but they are not sure-footed, which reminds me of an unpleasant incident.

Riding at a hand gallop one day over some hard ground my Arab tripped and fell, throwing me yards ahead; but, strange to say, I got no injury but a badly-bruised arm and hand. This was poulticed by the apothecary of whom I have already spoken, and, lying asleep at night, I became dimly conscious of something tugging at my hand. Again and again this happened, and striking a light with my uninjured hand, I found myself surrounded on the bed and on chairs at hand by a swarm of rats, which had been contending for the contents of the poultice. As I was unable otherwise to get rid of them, I was obliged to pull it off and allow the wound to cure itself, which it proceeded to do.

I nearly kissed mother earth on another occasion in India through the stupidity of my *ghorawallah*, or groom. He generally follows his sahib on foot, but on the occasion I speak of, when I started I told him that as I was only going a short distance he should await my return. It was dark when I came back, and the native has a habit of lying down on the ground and going to



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sleep whenever he has nothing to do. The *ghorawallah* foolishly chose for this purpose the place just close to and under the bungalow verandah where I naturally would ride up to on my return. Neither I nor the horse saw him in the dark, and I was almost riding over him when, suddenly awakened, he rose. Needless to say, the startled animal rose too, and as the verandah was a low one plunged on to it, upsetting the chairs and tea-tables that stood upon it.

I had a strange example of vigorous old age in another horse I had in India, a Persian, which perhaps, for all-round usefulness, is the best breed in India. He was over twenty years of age, as was shown by the brand which the military authorities put on horses when they are discarded, this one having been so dispensed with from the artillery for bolting several years before. The bolting propensity had softened down with years to an extraordinarily rapid pace, as he would allow no other horse to get in front of him. In this he was helped by his great height and length of leg, as, though a most unusual thing in India, he stood nearly seventeen hands high, so that I never could mount without getting what is called a leg up, which was an inconvenience. Notwithstanding this, and his aged appearance, with a ewe neck, prominent teeth, and groggy forelegs, he was one of the most satisfactory mounts I ever had, and, like most big horses, was the least tiring to ride for long distances.

My many years' dealing with horses convinces me that many of them possess eccentricities, and the analogous quality of humour. I have already given an instance of this latter in the case of the squatter's horse running away with his clothes. Another occurs to me—I think it was in South Africa—where a friend had a mare that travelled in harness, but would sometimes,

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without any apparent reason, stop suddenly, the result being that the driver would flounder out on her back. This happened to me once, so I remember, if I did not fully appreciate, the humour of it.

A horse knows well who is on his back. One that I had in the Cape was said to be a perfect lady's horse, but I doubted it, as he had such a hard mouth that it took almost a power like a steam-engine to stop him when he wanted to go, which was his usual frame of mind. I therefore gave him several breathers round the local race-course in the village where I was then stationed, to exhaust some of his energies before putting my wife up. However, we soon found out that this preliminary was wholly unnecessary, as, mounted by a lady, he would obey the slightest touch of the rein. This reminds me of a dangerously narrow escape she had about the same time with an animal lent to us and said to be also a good lady's horse, but he reared so badly that he actually fell backward apparently on her, but fortunately the only thing under the animal was part of the riding habit, which was then worn much longer than is the fashion now.

I had two proofs of the eccentricity of horses in Australia. In one case, at a settler's house where I stayed, my host had foolishly bought a horse from a passer-by, after trying him in harness up and down the adjacent road, when he appeared most satisfactory. Later, he took me out to see the country with this horse in a buggy, when, of course, it was necessary to leave the road for the bush, through which it is very common to drive vehicles in Australia. No sooner, however, did the horse see the gate through which we were to drive on leaving the road, than he got into tantrums, and no amount of persuasion or force would induce him to go through, and we had to go back and get

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another animal. This was his eccentricity, but it rendered him absolutely useless for bush work, so that, no doubt, he frequently changed masters.

Horses are bought and sold without much thought in the Australian colonies, being so cheap, £12 to £15 being high prices, and I heard a man say once that he had just bought ten shillings' worth of them. It was true that they were somewhat broken down, but his business was to buy animals of this kind, give them rest and feeding, and then sell them at a good profit. The Australian is a good horseman, in the sense that he can retain his seat under great difficulties, though in this he is greatly helped by the enormous knee pads which form part of every Australian saddle, a relic of the buck-jumper, an animal now almost extinct. In fact, a more docile beast than the ordinary Australian hack it would be hard to find. But the colonial is not a good horseman in the care of his beast, galloping him over the hardest of roads, taking off his saddle when hot, and doing and leaving undone various other things, habits which are no doubt owing to the low value of horse-flesh. While I am on this subject, I may say that the Australian always wears his spurs with the ends sticking downwards; why, I do not know, except that he is at the Antipodes; moreover, when he sees anyone from other parts of the world wear them in the usual way, with the rowels upwards, he despises him as a man who had never seen a horse before, and the stranger has to get over this.

The other case of eccentricity I found when riding a borrowed animal which was so inert and lazy that it required plentiful applications of the whip and spur to get him out of a walk. It therefore never occurred to me that there was any risk, when it began to rain, in unstrapping a mackintosh from the saddle, meantime

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throwing the reins on his neck and attempting to put the coat on. Just as this was being accomplished the animal began to plunge and, being totally off my guard, I was off his back in a moment—ejected as quickly as a suffragette from a public meeting. So much for eccentricities.

In Spain, my first horse was such a bright dun in hue that it might almost be called canary colour. This animal had a past. He had been ridden by a revolutionary general who had been shot while on his back, and it is possible that the vivid colour of the animal might have had something to do with his rider's destruction. The dun's successor with me was the magnificent animal that saved my life on two occasions from fire and water, as have been already related. He was called Pompey from the fact of his having a Roman nose, and because Andalusia, which was the scene of his exploits, was also that of some of his namesake's career.

It is strange what an antipathy some horses have to camels. This I noted in India, where, when this is the case, it is impossible to induce the horse even to approach them. In the dry interior of Australia camels have been introduced as beasts of burden, and the same effect has been observed even at the first meeting. Talking of camels, the horse is simply nowhere as a pack animal in comparison with them. I have seen a camel in Australia carry two pianos in their cases, one on each side.

It is a change to go from the noble and simple-minded friend of man, who is now being gradually driven from the streets and roads by mechanical and unfeeling contrivances, to scenes where no doubt nobility and simplicity do exist, but in which other qualities are to be found, that is to say, where the machinery of universal suffrage is in full working. In the colonies,

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duty brought me into contact with ultra-democratical parliamentary life, and I learnt thoroughly to agree with what Mirabeau is said to have remarked, that laws are like soup, in that it was just as well not to see them made. The amount of useless talk, each member following another repeating the same arguments that had been already set forth, made one think that the speakers felt bound to show to their constituents that they were saying, if not doing, something. All gas! nothing but gas, in most instances. Members of the Lower Houses in, I believe, most of the colonies, as also in most European countries, are paid salaries which, of course, come out of the taxes, so that the public have to pay a double gas bill, the domestic one, however, having the advantage in giving us useful light, at all events.

Under universal suffrage in any country the majority must necessarily be the most ignorant, and they naturally produce, as a rule, ignorant representatives. Some of them, though they may be entirely well meaning, propose and carry measures which, owing to the want of the most elementary knowledge of economics, cause often more harm than good to their own class. But there are other effects of a low franchise, of which I will give a few instances from my personal knowledge, premising that I am referring to the old days.

A member in one of these legislatures was making a speech, the wandering character of which indicated that his visits to the parliamentary refreshment bar had been more frequent than wisdom would dictate. A member on the other side of the House rose and called the attention of the Speaker to the fact that the hon. member who was in possession of the House did not appear to be in a fit state to address it. On this, the accused legislator rushed across the Chamber in an

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excited state, obviously to assault the interrupter, but was held back by other members, and for the moment the incident closed. However, when I left the House later on in the night, I found, at the foot of the steps outside, leading to the entrance, the drunken member with his coat off, amidst an excited crowd from the street, shouting out defiance to his foe whom he was expecting down the steps, and threatening to break every bone in his body when he appeared ; like Jupiter,

*“Media nimborum in nocte, corusca fulmina molitur dextra.”*

Apprehensive that he might mistake me for his opponent, I sidled down at one side of the steps, and, without seeing it, knocked over and broke a glass of whisky—one of the causes of all this woe, which, no doubt, the irate member had left unfinished so as to have his hands free to finish the other man. There were several policemen standing round, but the place being within the railings separating the precincts of Parliament from the street, the hon. member could not be arrested legally, and I suppose even if a fight ensued it could only be controlled by the Sergeant-at-Arms. However, it never came to this, as the threatened member judged it expedient to pass out by another way. Except for a brief reference to the few words said within the House, there was nothing reported in the newspapers of the “scene.”

Another parliamentary incident was that of a member who, while travelling in an intoxicated state in a railway carriage, drew out a revolver and shot a totally inoffensive clergyman who was in the same compartment. The latter recovered after many months of suffering, and this being outside the holy precincts, the member had to go to prison for some months. Notwithstanding this, he was re-elected by his constituency, and I heard him

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make a speech in Parliament, in which, alluding to some previous political event, he spoke of it as occurring at a time when he was "under a cloud." The impression apparently sought to be conveyed was that the sunshine of political brilliance under which he flourished had only been slightly and temporarily obscured by a trifling accident.

Ignorance in legislators is, of course, inevitable, as I have said, when they are elected by the most ignorant of the population. An amusing instance of this I heard in a speech when the member delivering it said that, under conditions against which he was protesting, the country would be plunged into a state of confusion and *arnica*.

One of the members noted for his picturesque expressions was objecting to militarism in general, and especially to the appointment to the chief command of the colonial forces of a general from England who had recently arrived in the colony, and spoke of him as "this swaggering swashbuckler, this imported glory."

"Scenes" in Parliament, especially those which, in the old days before sensational journalism existed, were never reported, have, no doubt, occurred even in the sedate realms of the English Parliament, and are not unnatural in the more vigorous and less trammelled life of the colonies, and perhaps the absence of conventionalism is not altogether a bad thing. But in all legislatures they tend to disappear as the constituencies and those they elect are acquiring more knowledge, through education, of what constitutes a good legislature. It must be remembered that these incidents occurred many years ago. Garrulousness, however, seems difficult to get rid of, and it would be well for some members of Parliament in all countries to read Chaucer's description

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of the Clerk of Oxford, which indeed should be taken to heart by every parliamentarian :—

“Not one word spake he more than was need ;  
All that he spake it was of high prudènce,  
And short and quick, and full of great sentence.”

All this leads to the conclusion that when we have Parliaments elected by the lowest suffrage, in which men seem to be chosen who know no more about legislation than a worm does of playing a prelude of Tchaikowsky, some sort of training or test should be applied before candidature is allowed. Of course, it will be understood that the instances here given are picked ones. It must not be supposed for one moment that episodes like the foregoing illustrate the ordinary course of colonial legislation, in which effective but dull business has its full share. Reputable and capable members do, and even in that time, did exist, among others, for instance, one of the sons of Charles Dickens, and many others whom I consider it a privilege to have among my friends.

That the material for good legislators is to be had in the colonies is evident from the better class of the Lower Houses, and the whole of the Upper Chambers, the members of which are either nominated or elected by a more educated body.

The difficulty with pronunciation illustrated by my story of the “confusion and arnica” incident reminds me of another. In the early eighties a colonial official who is termed the Master in Equity was named Deffle. Calling one day at the house of a friend who was out, and finding that he had no card with him, he told the servant to tell his mistress that the caller was Mr. Deffle. Seeing her rather puzzled look, he added, “The Master in Equity—your mistress will know.” When, later, the mistress came home, the girl said to her, almost crying,



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"Oh, ma'am! I don't know whatever to say, but a man was here, ma'am, a very dark gentleman, and, oh dear! I'm sure he said it, ma'am; he said he was the devil himself, the Master of Iniquity." I heard the story from the judge who succeeded him in the office.

The following are somewhat analogous, but were slips of the tongue only. I heard at a public meeting a man commence his speech by quoting, as he thought, from Keats—

"A thing of duty is a boy for ever."

Being an educated man he knew better, of course, but misquoted from nervousness, and went on without apparently knowing his mistake.

Attending a church committee meeting, I heard a bishop reading aloud from a report in which the words "lapsed masses" frequently occurred, and eventually the nearest he could get to the expression was "last matches."

There was a little newsboy at a bookstall on my way home from office in the evening whose cry of several evening papers ending with "Evening News! Star!" developed, with constant repetition, into something like "stewed oysters"! It was difficult to understand how, yet there was a distinct utterance, with a tinge of the original through it all. The poor little chap, one hot bank holiday when he got relief from his "stewed oysters," went to bathe in an inlet of the sea close by where we lived, and was quickly gobbled up by a shark. He was a fat boy.

I have given perhaps too much space to the State, placing it, contrary to traditional custom, before the Church, as to which I must introduce some incidents, for, as far as a layman could be, I was closely associated with the latter, during most of the Australian period.

I had always a special admiration, especially from the

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literary point of view, for the English liturgy, and having been asked to give a lecture on it at the Sydney Cathedral Chapter-house, with the Dean in the chair, I was attracted to study it further as to its ancient origins. Hence, further addresses followed on other aspects of the question in other parishes, which naturally brought me more and more into contact with parsons and Church affairs. Being elected by my own parish as a lay representative to the Diocesan Synod, where I was an occasional speaker, I became later a member of its Standing Committee, a body which has much the same relation to the Synod as a Cabinet has to Parliament.

At Synod, though not to the same extent as in Parliament, whose rules, otherwise, we followed, some time was wasted, and the scriptural narrative of the Lord opening the mouth of the ass was apt sometimes there also to come into one's mind. Especially was this waste notable in debates on matters of ritual.

In a discussion of this sort, when a learned canon was raging against some ceremonies, a curious coincidence occurred. A table for the secretaries stood at one end of the Synod chamber, above which, on a higher level, sat the Archbishop who presided, the most of the three hundred members facing him. The table therefore stood, relatively to the members, much in the same position as a communion table does to a congregation. It was getting dusk, and just at the moment when the canon was fulminating against the particular horror of having lights on the communion table, the attendant gravely, but altogether unknowingly as regards the subject of the speech, placed two candles on the table exactly in the position which they would have occupied in a church so provided. The laugh was loud and long, even among the speaker's supporters, and it was some little time before he could proceed.

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A bishop, well known out there, told me of a curious experience. At a festival evening service there was to be a processional entry of the choir and clergy, ending up, according to custom, with himself, his chaplain preceding him with his crosier. The procession was to start from the vestry outside the church, which the genial climate allowed, and to come round a pathway in the churchyard, entering at the west door and proceeding up the centre of the church. It was very dark, however, and the bishop, who was a stranger, did not notice that there was a steep slope leading down from the side of the pathway. During the progress of the procession outside he slipped and fell over, and being the last man, and as the hymn, which was just being begun as the leading boys entered the church, was loud, the prelate was not missed by those preceding him. So up the aisle went the procession, followed by the chaplain and crosier, but no bishop, who with robes covered with mud, had to slink round to the vestry by another way, and clean himself before he could enter.

Lord Tennyson, who was for a time Governor-General of Australia, opened a school children's fête in one of the principal towns. The only available building suitable for the purpose was a large shed lent by a leading undertaker, the hearses being ranged round the space set apart for the ceremony. All went off very cheerfully notwithstanding the presence of these grim vehicles, and when the Governor-General left the undertaker presented him with an illustrated booklet advertising his business, and said that he hoped to have His Excellency's custom.

Talking of governors, an archdeacon of the diocese, since made a bishop, told me that he had to preach on some State occasion before the Governor of the colony at the cathedral. He had not written his sermon, but,

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as was his custom, had just put down on a slip of paper the headings of each branch of his subject. During the service a severe headache came on which gradually got worse as he got into the pulpit, so that his ideas had all practically gone to the winds. All he could do was to read out the headings successively with a few common-places to each, and close up, coming down from the pulpit disgraced for ever as a preacher, as he thought. Great, therefore, was his astonishment, on meeting next day the A.D.C. to His Excellency, to hear from him that the Governor was specially charmed with the sermon, speaking of it as crisp, to the point, and containing everything necessary to the argument, and nothing more. It had led him, the archdeacon told me, to look at the matter in the future more from the congregation's than from the preacher's point of view.

I had contributed many articles to periodicals and daily papers and read a good many scientific papers at the Royal Society of New South Wales, of which, later, I became a member of council and, ultimately, President. Also, I was appointed by the Senate of the University of Sydney to deliver a course of twenty lectures to its engineering students, in the absence in Europe of the Professor of engineering. In addition, I gave several addresses on literary subjects to various societies, being the president of one of them for twelve years. But these matters do not usually include incidents of the adventurous character, which is the main subject of this work. Hence mere mention of them is sufficient.

## CHAPTER XIX

A trip home—Modern voyaging—Eccentric fellow-passengers—The tropical sea and sky—Italy and Switzerland—Germany—*Macbeth* in Berlin—Queen Victoria's death—Effect in Colonies—Small weather—Changes at home.

**S**EVENTEEN long years' absence from the Old Country, considerations of health, as well as the necessity which applies to most professional men abroad of bringing themselves up to date by visiting centres of development, gave rise to a delightful trip home to Europe about the time at which we have now arrived.

In this great age of material progress, travelling, especially by sea, makes great strides as regards speed and comfort, and this was largely noticed in the voyage home as contrasted with that which brought us to the Antipodes so many years before.

Life on board is not only vastly different from that of the old sailing ship of fifty or sixty years ago, but even from that on the ocean mail steamers of a much later period. The passengers, with the officers of the ship, formed then a comparatively small social party, all dining at one table, and having more or less close intercourse, intensified by the greater length of the voyage. The interest in the navigating officer's observations of the sun at noon, which were carried out on the passengers' deck among them, is past, as these are now unseen far aloft, and the progress of the day and night, as marked by the watch bells, is not noted, as, far away in the distant bow, they are unheard. Tiers of decks on the great 10,000 to 20,000 ton monster

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ocean house-boats now separate class from class, and the navigating operations from both, while to most of the passengers the captain is a distant and awful magnate, to be approached and appealed to only on the most momentous occasions. The passengers dine at small separate tables, and are often so numerous that many are still strangers to each other at the end of the voyage, cliques being also inevitable. There are deck stewards, table stewards, and bedroom and bath attendants, all having their separate duties, while all sorts of things likely to be wanted, or forgotten to be provided beforehand, are to be purchased at the barber's shop. The dinner menu is elaborate, and its dainties must be assimilated in the costume which iron custom has decreed to be essential to this important ceremony.

Balls are held on the ample deck, in which all the usual etiquette and full dress of such entertainments on shore are maintained. There are electric lighting, electric fans whirling round all night in the cabins when wanted in the tropics, a printing press, and many comforts and luxuries not to be found in many a small town, to which, in many ways, a big ship is comparable. Notwithstanding these advances on the old style, many old things remain. There are many mysteries of life which constantly puzzle most of us. For instance, why does one half of the moon face us as she careers monthly round us? Nothing is known of the other side, all is mystery. Why are people in hot countries black, seeing that this hue is the worst radiator of heat and light? Why do people vote for Brown, simply because Brown puts up a poster in large capitals, telling them imperiously to do so? Why do women wear long dresses, and then make them short ones by holding them up behind with a most ungraceful contortion of the elbow, rendering themselves other-

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wise as helpless as if they were one-armed? But above all, as pertaining especially to our voyage, why, on ship-board, before every sunrise, are a set of noisy, jocular sailors set to wash and scrub decks, generally needlessly, all round and above inoffensive and sleepy passengers? Needlessly surely so often, for amid the clean sea and with covered decks there can be no greater necessity, except the tyranny of precedent, for scrubbing and slushing than in a dusty hotel or other place of public resort on land, where such operations are not so frequent. Spring seems to go on always at sea, as far as cleaning is concerned. This again is a mystery, as Ruskin so frequently observes, but it is one which accounts perhaps to some extent for part of the irritability marking a few of the otherwise placid tempers in the passengers.

Then there is sea-sickness, that dread monster, modified, no doubt, by the increased size of the modern liner, but still with us. Byron, in addressing the sea, says, "Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow"; but if Time does not do so, the winds and the vicious ground-swell of the shore write them many and deep, and for the first few days of the voyage "Little Mary" becomes coy, uncertain, and very hard to please. Oh, for a genuine cure! Specifics there are in hundreds; but until the immediate cause is known, we may look in vain for a remedy. Tight belts, red spectacles, high feeding, starvation, whisky, and other prescriptions have all been tried in vain. Shortly before we left, at the Professors' lunch, which I joined while lecturing to the University students, the company hung on a distinguished physician's words of advice on this subject. He knew of two highly valuable cures which had never been known to fail, and which he would freely impart to them without fee or reward. Their countenances fell,

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however, when he proceeded to say with much solemnity, in fact in a thoroughly bedside manner, that the first was for the sufferer to get on land at the first opportunity, and the second was for him to go with the ship to the bottom. The effectiveness of the prescriptions, at all events, if they had nothing else to recommend them, was indisputable. Strange it is that, as often in the body politic so in the human frame, frequently the most ignoble part rules the rest. One man may have a brain of the greatest capacity; another may have strong arms and legs which he and others may think of even greater value; but what use are either of these with the central regions in a disorganized state? They lie as useless and helpless as a ship on shore.

Perhaps no more graphic picture of a ship's voyage has ever been painted in words than that of the first foreign missionary which ended in the shipwreck at Melita—originally written in Greek and translated into the glorious Tudor English of the Bible. The craft was small, and the fate of the whole ship's company so full of moment and peril, that the introspection of their individual characters, besides being no purpose of the narrative, would have been impossible. What a contrast to a voyage of the ocean-liner of to-day with its safety, its luxury, and its speed, all of which turn the attention of the traveller from the possibilities of disaster to the study of his fellow-passengers, and of nature in its more peaceful aspects. There is no place in which the leading idiosyncrasies of men and women are so manifest as on board ship. Habits and propensities, which to an ordinary acquaintance would never be known, display themselves when people are brought into such immediate contact with one another as living together, even within the wide and lengthy area of a great modern steamer. It is in vain to try



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and suppress them, they will come out ; like the pepper added to the oyster, the contact of mind with mind brings out the flavour of each. Pope's maxim that "the proper study of mankind is man" can never be so well realized as at sea.

There was the grim-looking old warrior chewing his cigar as he paced up and down the lengthy deck, who seldom spoke except to a coterie of his own, to which he laid down his opinion on things in general and religion in particular in firm dogmatic style. He had several oddities, such as ordering stout at dinner and putting sugar in it, and salting his coffee. Then there was the athletic female who repeated her nine times round the vast deck which was said to equal a mile, and passed ever and anon before your chair like a comet of known periodic time. Another passenger, an old maid, was too much even for the captain of the ship, as to which notable victory a tale must be told. She had the port-hole berth, and her three cabin mates wanted to have the port open, but even when the torrid zone was entered rigidly tight would she keep it, regardless of the equal rights in the matter supposed to belong to all the occupants. Compromise was offered, such as changes of bunks, so that the lady might avoid the direct action of the draught without her companions being stifled, but in vain—she had paid for her berth and would stick to it. The chief steward and the purser were appealed to, but they were unequal to the occasion ; ultimately, the awful captain himself was asked to give orders to enable the sufferers to be relieved, and the port-hole shutter was screwed back open by his orders. A curtain which hung back was then closed across the port by the intrepid defender of her rights, and this being removed by the captain's orders, the resourceful spinster blocked up the aperture with her clothes. At

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this point the captain himself gave in, and at the first opportunity the other ladies were provided for in other cabins, and the conqueror remained in sole possession. When the story got about, it was freely remarked that had the same difficulty occurred to men, they would have very soon settled the question by throwing the clothes, the last line of defence, out of the window.

Another figure comes before me as I write. A tall gentlemanly Syrian of nearly middle age, polished in manners and benevolent in countenance, talking with equal fluency and ease all the principal European languages in addition to his own. Except for a slightly dark complexion, contrasting with his iron-grey beard, and red fez, no one could have distinguished him from a European of high breeding and education. He seemed the very acme of good conduct and correctness, being a special favourite with the ladies, as well as popular with the other sex, as, having travelled much, he had funds of information derived from personal experience. Great, therefore, was our surprise when, shortly after the voyage was over, we read in the newspapers that this gentleman was arrested in Belgium for the murder of his nephew, and this was supposed to be the last of a series of similar crimes—ultimately he was sent to prison for life.

Finally, there was the well-educated English-speaking Cingalese going to Oxford, who had provided himself with a number of waistcoats, putting them on one over another gradually as the northern end of the Red Sea was reached, and such cold as he never had any idea of began to be felt. His last waistcoat and the limits of his consequential corpulence were reached before we entered the Mediterranean with its refreshing airs to us, and he had no further resource but the old one of the grin, which I must say was hardly a cheerful one.

But after all the interest in human shipboard types is

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limited like the ship itself, while never-failing Nature in all its sublimity is above and around us. There is at once a grand monotone and an infinite variety about the tropical ocean—the vast expanse and the sense of the illimitable, unchangeable distance, unbroken, as a rule, for weeks together, by a single passing craft; but the shifting colours are innumerable. With the wind and sun together we note the sapphire blue of the ever restless waves tipped with their silver crests; while with calmer weather, the purples and greys of the sea answer the challenge of the constantly changing sky. Critics have questioned the propriety of the epithets of the great word painter Homer, and especially so in writing the “wine-coloured” sea; but when the sun is beginning to redden in the west, and to throw his tints on fleecy clouds in the zenith, a decidedly wine-colour tinge is reflected down from them upon the sea. So that though, undoubtedly, the sense of colour in primitive times was not so keen as it is now, it is much more probable that the old bard, who loved the sea, would have noted these tints, than he should have confounded the ordinary greens and blues of the sea with the colour of wine, which could never have been either.

Then there is the grand variety of Cloudland, so much more conspicuous at sea, probably because it is never hidden by, or contrasted with, terrestrial things, and because we are practically all day within sight of it. The brilliance of the tropic day-cloud and, later, the gorgeous tints of sunset, the delicate rose, the golden fringe, the pearly green melting into the cold blue above, make us who gaze cease to talk of common things. It is the time—

“When in the crimson clouds of even,  
The lingering light decays,  
And Hesper, in the front of Heaven,  
His glittering gem displays.”

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Then later, when coming up on deck, with silence all around us except for the ceaseless throb of the engines, we look up to the brilliantly sparkling vault above us with a splendour unknown outside the tropics—it is then that we seem to separate ourselves from earth, so soiled by the feet of men, and we think of the meanness and trivialities of the day that has just passed, and of the worthlessness of the petty ends for which one has struggled and quarrelled, while we realize more than at any other time the awful solitude, notwithstanding its great company of people, of the great ship cutting its way through the black and lonely sea.

Of Italy and Switzerland revisited much might be said, if this did not go beyond the scope of this book. Germany, where business led me, I had not seen for forty-five years, and much beer had flowed there since then, and many things were new. As to the business, which was to inspect rack railways in the Hartz Mountains, I can never forget the willingness and kindly alacrity of the officials, to whom I had introductions, to show me everything I desired to see, and to place at my disposal every means in their power to enable me to do so. Here—it was in Berlin—I enjoyed *Macbeth*. Shakespeare's plays were running at two theatres there, while he was unheard at that time in London: the true English "Unemployed Bill" of the day. The actor of the Thane gave a version of the banquet scene which I had never seen previously, rushing at the spectre sword in hand, overturning all the properties, and then when Banquo vanishes, becoming terrified and utterly unhinged. As if the physical courage which Macbeth undoubtedly possessed actuated the first impulse, the sense of the supernatural striking him only as a second impression. It was a fine rendering.

The changes at home were great. First, the good old

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Queen was gone : and I should like to speak here of an incident happening before I left Australia which showed how much she was in the minds of her people, even to the uttermost parts of the earth. It was at the time of her fatal illness, and I was coming down the stairway of the public building in which my office was placed, when a man coming up—a total stranger—as he passed me simply said—“She is dead.” She—that was enough ; everyone in the Empire would understand.

This was the first visit home after the effect of compulsory education had taken effect on the grown-up people of the lower classes, and the result was manifest. The latter had bobbed up to the surface, like the Japs. Sam Weller was as dead as Queen Victoria, and except among the older people, the right letter was in the right place. Why, by the way, do cathedral vergers still keep to the old ways? Love of antiquities, I suppose. We heard one describing a stained glass window as “Hadam hand Heve hordered hout of Heden.” Then the small shop, as such, had gone. Nearly every one of them belonged to a limited company—a system which has put miles of distance between employer and employé, the former becoming a soulless abstraction—a bad thing for both.

Another thing that strikes one who has been long out of England in far-off countries is what I might call the small weather. There is no rain, no sunshine, no wind, in the sense that one is accustomed to abroad. The only thing that is really done well and thoroughly in this way is the London fog, unknown in its peculiar characteristics elsewhere.

Coming to another point, the fewness of lifts and telephones as compared with the almost universal use of them in Australia is remarkable, though the latter is not an unmixed good. I remember having one on my

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office table, and being rung up when in close conference with a colleague on important business. Annoyed at the interruption, I said to the man at my side, "This thing must be an invention of the Devil!" Happening to say the last word near the mouthpiece of the telephone, a reply came immediately through it, "Whom did you say?"

This reminds me of another telephone incident there. The cook had rung up, as she thought, the butcher, whose name was Russell, and the former having great powers of vituperation and of volubility, began rating the tradesman for sending tough meat and for other delinquencies. The man at the other end was meanwhile trying in vain to get in a word, until at last, there being for a moment a lull in the storm, there came through, in the mild voice which was one of the well-known characteristics of the speaker, "But I am Russell, the Astronomer Royal!"

Though it has nothing to do with telephones, I am tempted, reminded by the name, to give a story in connection with the latter able scientist, now some years dead. My civil engineering readers will understand, but for others who are not, it will be necessary to explain the term "datum." It is an imaginary level above or below which heights on plans, etc. are given, so that the difference between one height or level and another can be readily distinguished. This datum is usually sea-level, and as this varies on various parts of the coast through tides, currents, etc., a mean sea-level is often used. As there had been some confusion as to this in the colony, to settle the matter the Government appointed a board of three, of which the astronomer and I were two members. Coming home late from business one evening, I explained that I had been sitting on a board on the sea-level with Russell,

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the astronomer. The picture of two grave Government officials, both elderly, and one, the astronomer, fat, trying to keep afloat in the harbour on a plank, which was that which at first presented itself to the mind of the hearers of the explanation, can be imagined. It is very necessary sometimes to select one's words.

But to return from this digression to the Old Country. The pampering and its unpleasant consequence, the precocity of children, is another remarkable change of which we have yet to see the results. I heard the following from an intimate friend of a well-known Dean. He was preaching earnestly in his cathedral on the duties of parents towards their children, and the necessity, for their future welfare, of keeping them under proper control. During the discourse the little shrill voice of a small boy was heard in the deanery pew, saying, in no subdued tones, "I shan't! I shan't!" and whatever it was, he didn't. So much for preaching and practice.

Coming home in the old days, it was an adventure, and a glorious one, the first meeting again of the never-to-be-equalled-anywhere-else beefsteak of old England—juicy, tender, savoury. Alas! it is gone, except, I suppose, for a few who can pay double what is given for the imported colonial, which has become the ordinary supply. Formerly English meat was the only sort procurable. But after all, there is much to set against all this, and we sadly turned back to the wrong side of the earth.

## CHAPTER XX

A burial at sea—The returned Scotch crofter—My murder frustrated—  
A haunted railway station—A transplanted Baptist—The magnificent  
resources of Australia—Home at last—Conclusion.

**A** BURIAL at sea! Much as I had voyaged, I now for the first time saw this mournful rite shortly after we steamed away on our return to the Antipodes. It was that of a young man who must have had the fatal microbe already at work upon him when he embarked, so soon was he launched into the great deep. The solemnity of the proceedings was much spoilt by the intrusive improving of the occasion by the missionary who read the service referring, ignorantly, to the sad case of the deceased's sorrowing widow and children, and picturing their great and uncontrollable grief, while most of those listening knew that the man buried was a youthful bachelor.

It is unnecessary to speak again of the fearful wild-fowl which seem to be included in every shipful of passengers, but I must make an exception in the case of a typical one. A Scotchman who had come home with us was now with us again, on his return to Australia. Forty years ago, as a farm labourer he emigrated and bade farewell to his friends. A few letters passed, but, as is common in such cases, they ceased after a time. He prospered and married, but withal retained his broad Scotch accent and his love for the old land, and, after all these years, felt a yearning to spend some of his earnings in returning to his old village. There he expected to be welcomed with open arms by his old



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cronies Sandy, Jock, and the rest; but though the lochs and braes were the same as of old, though apparently much smaller, the villagers for the most part knew nothing of him; many were dead, some were in the workhouse or had emigrated like himself, while the few of his contemporaries who were left hardly remembered even his name, and stared at him when he tried to be friendly and communicative. They had acquired other interests, and had lost all concern about him, and did not care whether he was alive or dead, so that, disgusted and disappointed, he was now on his return to end his days in his adopted country.

Adventures seldom come to the sexagenarian, hence there are few episodes of this character which remain to be told. Curious to say, the final ones which will close this story have a strange connection with that mighty angel, dusty Death, who, with microbes in his wings, is ever rustling round us, young as well as old.

I had occasion, shortly after resuming my duties, to deal with a drunken subordinate whom, for repeated offences, I had to suspend from his duties pending the decision of the Government. One day, before this decision was given, another assistant suddenly burst into my room as white as a sheet and quivering with excitement, to tell what had happened in the lobby outside. He had seen the man who had been suspended come into the office and fetch a revolver from the drawer of the desk at which he had previously worked, and suddenly leave the room, threatening to shoot me. The assistant was after him in a moment, and a fearful struggle in the passage followed, on the issue of which my, and perhaps his, life depended, as, excited with drink, the man's blood was up, and he had entirely lost control over his actions. However, others came to the rescue, and the would-be murderer was secured and

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taken home to sober himself. As he became thoroughly repentant afterwards, and made an ample personal apology to me, I took no further action.

One of the last acts of my active professional life which was to end in Australia, was the commencement of a large new terminal railway station at Sydney. The site on which it was to be built was on the principal cemetery of the city, and all the corpses had to be first exhumed and removed to other burial-ground. This was a ghoulish and Druce-like business, except that, instead of the digging up of one imitation Duke as at Highgate, we had to exhume thousands of real ordinary citizens, erecting over their silent and now forsaken graves buildings which would resound with the noise and turmoil of nearly a thousand trains a day. Well for us engineers that no Shakespeare lay there, with his grim curse for those who would disturb his bones. I can imagine, however, that now when a midnight train arrives, disturbed and uneasy shades may flit away along platforms, through waiting-rooms and parcel offices, flying before the shrieks and hisses of the panting engine and its crowded following.

Among these wanderers surely is the restless and perplexed ghost of an old man, as to the disposal of whose mortal remains a curious tale may be told. Before the coffins were taken up, the surviving relatives, if they could be found, of the persons whose bodies were dealt with, were consulted as to what other existing burial-place removal should be made, and also into what division, Anglican, Roman, Presbyterian, or otherwise, the reburial should be effected. A prominent Anglican, who had originally been a Baptist, requested that the body of his father, who had been buried in the Baptist section in the old cemetery, should occupy, in its new destination, the more exalted position, as he then thought

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it to be, of the Anglican quarter. Surely the old gentleman might have been left where he, no doubt, desired to be laid, among his own people.

I have related some facts resulting from the choice of representatives to popular chambers in Australia, chiefly because they were amusing incidents, but these are largely of the past; education is advancing by giant strides, and improvement is manifest as the older generations are passing away. There are plenty of capable business-like men in the colonies available for carrying out legislation of the best kind, and the constituencies will gradually but surely find them out. Indeed, many have done so already, the best men learning by degrees that there is really some good in coming forward. But even if this were not so, the country is too full of vast resources to be much hindered in its progress by any hasty or ill-considered legislation. Australia is teeming with potential wealth, both agricultural and mineral, sufficient population is alone wanting. The vast plains of much of the inland country were, when I first went out, considered to be only fit for sheep, but large portions of them, possessing a rich chocolate soil, have now been tested for some years for wheat, and it is grown so prolifically that the good seasons far more than compensate for the droughts, the effects of which great irrigation schemes will largely diminish. One of these, now in hand, rivals in magnitude the greatest of the Indian and Egyptian works, and more are projected. Coal has long been developed. The production of steel is beginning, and with a climate ranging from that of the south of England to Algiers, Australia, of all the countries to which my vagabond life has led me, is surely that in which the most abundant promise is evident.

In spite of the contrary opinion of one of the wisest of men, Seneca, travel seems to me to be one of the

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greatest educators of mankind. Is it nothing to have seen the white wonders of the Taj-Mahal, the terror of the monsoon's burst, the peak of Mount Pilatus touched by rosy-fingered morn, the glory of the interior of St. Mark's, the mighty rush of Niagara, the impassive mystery of the Sphinx, the tangled magnificence of the tropical forest, and the happy laugh of the little naked Cingalese children?

These form company in solitude—

“stealing fire  
From the fountains of the past,  
To glorify the present.”

Bacon says that every man is a debtor to his profession. The debt due to that noble one which has sustained me for fifty years, I have been enabled to attempt to pay, by means of professional journalism, since my retirement from active practice and return to England. Many colleagues I have worked with in “subduing the earth,” which scriptural command seems to me to specially apply to the work of the engineer. I have not mentioned more of these friends than has been necessary for the relation of the incidents of these pages; but I may fittingly conclude with one general remark. Many I have found highly capable, many hard workers, some of them mathematical geniuses, several of infinite courage and resource, some ignorant, some lazy, a few drunkards, others crotchety and difficult to deal with; but not one have I met with who was dishonourable or corrupt.

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