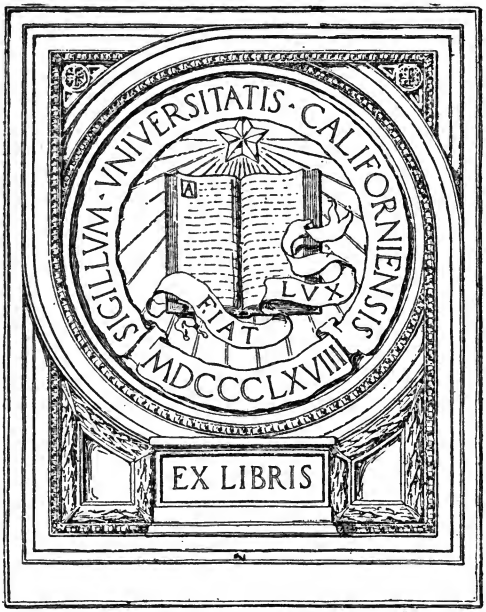
AT A DOLLAR A YEAR

ROBERT L. RAYMOND



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Ripples on the Edge of the Maelstrom

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By

ROBERT L. RAYMOND

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TRAP-GREASE

GENERAL LUCIUS QUINTUS GISH had a fine cavalry seat. He was "regular army,"—not a West Pointer, but having entered the service from civilian life twenty years before the great war, had long since outstripped all West Point officers in matters of military punctiliousness and in the strength of his conviction as to the ineffectiveness and general futility of civilian life. He was a short fat little man with chubby round cheeks, white hair and a white moustache.

He sat erect, head a little back, his legs booted and spurred, describing that arc of a circle which when applied to legs is commonly known as "bow," and glared with a martial eye at the men before him.

"The hour of assembling is twelve o'clock," he called out in strident tones of command. "An order from the President

of the United States is the only thing which will be considered an excuse for absence or tardiness. I will not have either one in any organization I command."

He brought his clenched fist down on the desk before him with a bang; for the scene was not in the field, and General Gish was not on horseback addressing a troop of cavalry. His mount was an office chair, and his audience the fourteen heads of sections of the Camp Service Division Office of the Quartermaster General. Seated in the long, low-ceiled, paper-walled room of one of the temporary war buildings which had crowded every foot of vacant space in the parks and open places of Washington, about half of those present were in uniform, while the others were clad in the garb common to peaceful business men. These last fell on General Gish's tortured vision with about as gratifying an effect as a colored Sunday Supplement would have had upon the eye of Raphael when his canvas had been set to paint a Madonna. A wise and great man, acting as Quartermaster General of the army, had hit upon the startling discovery that men selected for the express purpose of handling strictly business mat-

ters in business offices might be able to accomplish results as well if they retained their familiar identities as civilians as if they were compelled to dress as majors and captains. General Gish knew how to take orders from those of higher rank, and when the innovation was decreed had perforce made gallant efforts to swallow his resentment, which however he never succeeded in getting much below his diaphragm.

All the men present had made a success in their own affairs, and many had amassed considerable fortunes, when the call to duty caused them to leave everything behind and give their time and service to their country.

A year before, General Gish had been one of the oldest captains in the army, and never until grim-visaged war put a premium on every member of our regular forces had he dealt with a transaction involving a sum larger than one thousand dollars. Since our entrance into the war he had been chief of the Camp Service Division.

"He certainly is having the time of his life," whispered Bob Stockdale to Tresham who sat beside him, as the General proceeded to deliver a lecture which a batch

of repentant recruits returning drunk and disorderly from leave of absence might have found appropriate.

"Section heads will now make their reports to me," said General Gish, having in the course of twenty minutes exhausted a somewhat limited vocabulary.

Each man stood in turn and described his efforts to spin the wheels of army organization, while General Gish, with his military habit of instantaneous decision, interpolated comments and commands which performed a function similar to that of a monkey-wrench dropped in the midst of delicately adjusted machinery. The section heads took it all in good part. They had not come to Washington expecting a pleasure party. Even though some agreed with Brown's declaration that he would as lief be in a state prison, they were willing to play the new game as well as they could. Besides, they had a hazy idea of their standing, and even the civilians rather suspected that General Gish could put them in irons without a moment's warning and without the formality of a court-martial. Most of them middle-aged men, accustomed to conduct their own businesses as they liked, each

cherished a strong fellow feeling for the traditional cat in a strange garret.

"Garbage!" vociferated General Gish.

Mr. Jones arose and, shifting heavily from one foot to the other, timorously remarked: "Well, General, I am having a very bad time with Camp Gettysburg. They won't make the proper separations, and the contractor declares he won't pay for what he doesn't get."

General Gish's eyes flashed fire. "The contractor refuses to pay on an army contract?" he bellowed.

"But he says he doesn't owe anything," ventured Mr. Jones, "and I think there's some merit in his contention."

General Gish looked at Mr. Jones malevolently. "That contractor must be made an example of," he announced. "I won't have this division laughed at. Mr. Stockdale, as head of the legal section I want you to take this matter up at once and see if you can land this man in prison. Report to me at conference tomorrow. Dismissed."

General Gish rose and with clanking spurs marched from the room, followed by Major Bowker, recently commissioned from civilian life, whose duty it was to say

"That's so, General," when General Gish spoke, and who was euphoniously described by the latter as his Chief of Staff.

"What in the devil did you let me in for this for?" demanded Stockdale of Jones as the section heads filed out from their daily hour in the torture chamber.

Jones mopped a somewhat fevered brow with his handkerchief. "I let you in?" he queried, with pardonable indignation. "I let you in? Why I had n't started my story when that old— However, I 'll turn over the papers to you, and you can recommend that I be sent to jail if you can't find another goat."

After three hours' study of contracts and a file of correspondence which ran as high as the twenty-fourth endorsement, Stockdale put his head into Tresham's room, which was next to his own, and demanded, "What in hell is trap-grease?"

Tresham was engaged in a desperate attempt to figure out how to establish a standard for shoe-repair work, when it appeared that thirty men at Camp Shiloh could put in perfect order five hundred pairs of shoes in three days while fifty at Camp Vicksburg reported a hundred of the same repaired in

a week. It reminded him somehow of a problem of school days long ago, which to his exhausted mind seemed to have to do with a wheel six feet in circumference travelling a mile and a half and the number of men it would take to do the same piece of work in four days. Consequently he repeated the word "Trap-grease?" with a rising inflection and in a somewhat abstracted manner.

"Yes, trap-grease," said Stockdale with some irritation. "What in hell is it?"

"I suppose you catch it," said Tresham brightening up. "Why do you want any?"

"Want any?" said Stockdale with a hostile stare. "Look here, Phil, I've got to report on this mess to old Von Moltke tomorrow, and I wish you'd be a little sympathetic and let me run over the facts as I understand them, and then advise."

"Fire away," said Tresham genially, as he shoved the shoe-repair reports further back on his desk. "I'm listening."

Stockdale drew up a chair and turned an earnest gaze on his friend.

"It seems," he began, consulting certain notes in his hands, "that all Gaul, I mean all Garbage, is divided into four parts, as

follows: (*a*) Bones, (*b*) Bread, which includes all bread-stuffs unfit for human food, (*c*) Raw fats, cooked meats, grease, including trap-grease, (*d*) Other garbage."

"I bet I know what other garbage is," interrupted Tresham. "Swill."

"Why, it's all swill, you dummy," said Stockdale. "Let me get on."

"Oh, all right," said Tresham, "go ahead."

"Now the man who buys the garbage at Camp Gettysburg, awfully decent and humane sort of a chap he seems, fussing all the time because he won't have broken glass, tin cans and washing powder in his garbage; says the hogs he feeds it to don't like it, and one of them choked himself to death with a bit of glass the other day; well, this fellow complains that the Camp Quartermaster won't turn over the trap-grease and in consequence he refuses to make his last monthly payment on the contract."

Tresham held up his hand. "One moment," he said. "Will my listening to this help win the war?"

"Sure," answered Stockdale. "If not, why are you in Washington?"

"I only wanted to make certain," said

Tresham. "Go ahead. What does the Camp Quartermaster say to the charges?"

"Here's his last telegram," said Stockdale. "'Trap-grease absolutely at contractor's disposal, camp full of it, contractor very remiss in removing same, causing great inconvenience and endangering health conditions.'"

"Great Scott," said Tresham, "that contractor is a bad one after all. Any come back from him to that telegram?"

"Yes," answered Stockdale, "here's a letter in which he offers to prove that the men in at least half a dozen messes are doing him out of his trap-grease by selling it themselves."

"It certainly is a hard nut to crack," admitted Tresham, "but what does Jones say? He's garbage expert."

"He's just gone off on an inspection tour for a week," said Stockdale bitterly. "Of course, I went to see him the first thing after I'd read the papers. Meanwhile I've got to report tomorrow."

"What's the money value involved? How much does the contractor hold back?" queried Tresham.

Stockdale looked a trifle sheepish in

spite of the fact that the controversy was none of his contriving.

"That has nothing to do with it," he said.

"How much?" persisted Tresham.

"Well, forty-two dollars and sixty-five cents," admitted Stockdale.

"Great Scott! Look here, Bob, if I give a check for the amount wouldn't that help?"

"Nonsense," exclaimed Stockdale ungratefully, "the point is, how am I going to convince General Gish that he can't put the contractor in prison?"

"Oh, I know the answer to that," said Tresham blithely. "Convince Gish? It can't be done. If that's what is troubling you, forget it."

Stockdale smiled somewhat ruefully and looked at his watch. "I guess you are right," he said. "Half-past five. Let's go home."

The two walked slowly up Pennsylvania Avenue, pausing for a while at the corner of Twelfth Street to watch Col. Beaumont of the British Aviation Corps do a tail-spin in his aeroplane which stopped just short of the roof of the New Willard.

"There's one fellow who's got nothing

to worry about," observed Tresham as they resumed their walk, each with a slight crick in his neck.

"That's so," agreed Stockdale. "Only risks his life once or twice a day. He's all right, certainly."

Stockdale dined that night at the Bartleys. They had a magnificent house on Massachusetts Avenue, and the party was a large one. At dinner he found himself seated next to the beautiful Miss Lovering, formerly prominent in New York's smartest smart set, now resting in Washington after six months' Red Cross Canteen Service in the War Zone. She had hair the color of daffodils, blue eyes, a complexion that can only be described truthfully by the word peach-blow, an air of high distinction, and looked on the whole like a Russian princess. Her manners were charming and confiding, not to say insinuating, and her near presence was a balm to Stockdale, who had known her slightly for some time.

"Do tell me about your work," she said after a preliminary exchange of commonplaces had occurred. "You're in the Quartermaster's Department, aren't you?

And a civilian? What an experiment they are making! Do you like your work?"

Stockdale smiled grimly. "It has all the charm of novelty," he observed.

"What is your specialty, — Clothing, Equipage, Remount or Subsistence?" asked Miss Lovering, who amused herself by keeping a very pretty hand on the pulse of the war machine in Washington.

"Well, I've spent today studying garbage, if you must know," answered Stockdale. "It's a very interesting subject. All garbage is divided —"

"I don't want to know," interrupted Miss Lovering. "Surely your war work can't consist wholly in dealing with what I have always heard called by a shorter and uglier word. Don't you bring your trained legal mind to bear on anything else?" She smiled encouragingly.

"Well, yes, I suppose I do," admitted Stockdale.

"What?" pursued Miss Lovering.

"Well, if you're really interested," said Stockdale, who was growing more cheerful every minute, looking first at Miss Lovering and then down the table, "manure."

Miss Lovering paused in the act of

carrying her glass to her lips and gazed at Stockdale sternly, but seeing only an open and ingenuous countenance, one too that she somehow found singularly attractive, threw back her head and laughed.

"Upon my word," she said, "I don't wonder you look worried."

"Oh, it isn't that," answered Stockdale. His troubles seemed to be slipping away in the congenial society in which he found himself. "The subject matter of my job doesn't bother me a bit. I'm going to have framed a form of contract I'm working out to cover the sale of garbage, and also one for manure. I'll hang them in my dining room, along with the family portraits, so my descendants can say, 'This is what he did in the Great War.'"

Stockdale looked to the other end of the table and exclaimed, "By Jove, there's my boss now."

Miss Lovering followed his glance. "Oh, General Gish?" she remarked with a laugh. "Isn't he a funny old dear?"

Stockdale gazed at her suspiciously. "'Dear' isn't just the word I would use, if you asked me," he answered.

"He's a great beau of mine," went on

Miss Lovering, "and will do anything I ask him."

Hope gleamed in Stockdale's eye. From a full heart he poured out a tale in which the words "martinet," "penitentiary" and last but by no means least "trap-grease" were of frequent occurrence.

Miss Lovering was hugely interested. "Leave it all to me," she said mysteriously as she rose from the table. "Good-night. I have some diplomatic work to do and shan't see you again this evening."

The following day Stockdale filed in with the other section heads to the conference room with a sinking heart. He had no report ready, and Miss Lovering at the moment seemed as far away as General Pershing. Stockdale could not see much chance of help from either of them.

General Gish and Major Bowker entered, and all stood up respectfully until they were seated.

General Gish looked a trifle more important and martial than usual, if such a thing was possible. As a matter of fact, however, there was at the moment, floating before his mind's eye an entrancing vision of

feminine loveliness which murmured in dulcet tones the words: "You are so tactful, General Gish, that I know you understand how to get the best out of the men under you, by trusting them, giving them complete responsibility, I mean." Without preliminaries he uttered the magic word "Garbage!"

Stockdale's heart skipped three beats, and then did a sort of side-step. It was useless telling himself that General Gish could not commit *him* to prison or other place of confinement. It was useless, because in the innermost recesses of his heart he rather suspected it might be done. What could n't be done in war times?

"Mr. Stockdale, your report."

Stockdale rose. "All garbage is divided—" he began.

"No! no! no!" exclaimed General Gish. "I want your report on the situation at Camp Gettysburg."

Stockdale caught Tresham's eye and sought inspiration, but finding none there remarked desperately, "The contractor is not getting his trap-grease."

"Ha," said General Gish, breathing heavily. "What is trap-grease?"

Stockdale had passed beyond the point of caring what happened.

"I think you catch it," he said, "and perhaps the contractor has n't used the right bait."

A shudder passed round the room, and General Gish seemed about to explode. Presently he did so, with a laugh that caused him to puff and choke until his face became so deep a purple that Major Bowker was observed to lean forward towards his Chief and heard to mutter, "That 's so, General," although the latter had not spoken.

"Mr. Stockdale," resumed General Gish, "I do not care to enter into the details of this matter. As Chief of our legal section you should be competent to settle the affair without further reference to me. Do so. I have an appointment with the General Staff and will hear no other reports today. Dismissed."

General Gish and Major Bowker marched out of the room with clanking spurs.

"What did it mean?" asked Tresham of Stockdale as the two walked down the corridor to their offices.

"What is the handsomest present you can

properly send to a girl you hardly know?" asked Stockdale by way of answer. He paused at the threshold of his door. "One whom you'd like to know better?" he added.

SETTLING THE PEACE TERMS

SETTLING THE PEACE TERMS

I

IT was a mere coincidence that Tresham and Stockdale found themselves doing war work in the same office in Washington. The former had been at his post for some months when Stockdale, upon the recommendation of one of the Assistant Secretaries of War, came on to take his place as head of the newly created legal section of the Camp Service Division, O. Q. M. G.

The two were life-long friends, and their close association was as pleasing to them as it was unexpected. They "kept company," after the day's work was over, with considerable regularity. Stockdale was a bachelor, and so temporarily was Tresham — presumably for the duration of the war. His wife and several children remained at their all-the-year-round country house outside of Boston, while he tasted again the doubtful joys of single life. Tresham pro-

fessed to find these not only irksome but, as he phrased it, "terrific." The fact remained, however, that in spite of working longer hours and under greater pressure than he had ever done before, he had gained in weight and gave a general impression of being something like ten years younger than when he arrived at the nation's capital. He attributed this curious result, the existence of which he could not deny, to the tonic effect upon the human system of great sacrifices borne with fortitude.

Single men in Washington during the year 1918, whether spurious or the genuine article, did not need to spend their evenings in seclusion unless they preferred to do so. They were wanted for dinners, and theatre or bridge parties, both those where the gentler sex provided a tranquil contrast to the war whirl and those for men only. Tresham and Stockdale, however, after a hard day's work generally chose to spend the evening far from the madding crowd. After dinner at some hotel, they were accustomed to speed back to Tresham's rooms on the top floor of the apartment house on H Street near the club. It was a cosy little eyrie and looked out towards the State,

War and Navy building, the many lighted windows of which gave a cheery appearance to the night.

One evening early in May, after a period of mental discipline devoted to an heroic endeavor to keep their minds off the war, an attempt which had reduced both participants to a state of acute nervous irritation, Tresham suddenly asked, "What is the latest date you would be willing to take for the end of the war?"

"How do you mean 'take'?" queried Stockdale.

"Well, you don't know, and I don't know, when the war will end; nobody knows."

"No."

"Your guess or mine is just as good as the Kaiser's?"

"Probably."

"Now, I don't mean, when do you think the war will end, but taking into consideration the fact that it may end soon or may last for a long time, what date would you be willing to accept?"

"I think it will end sooner than most people do," said Stockdale musingly, "say in about three months."

"You've thought it would end in three

months for the last three years, haven't you?"

Stockdale nodded assent. "And lost a good deal of money on it," he observed.

"Never you mind, old top," Tresham said, "don't get discouraged. If you've got a good idea, stick to it. You keep right on saying three months, and some day, if you live long enough, you'll be right. But that's not the question I'm putting."

"I don't get just what you are driving at," admitted Stockdale.

"I'll illustrate. You don't know how long you are going to live, do you?"

"No."

"Well, what age would you be willing to accept as a certainty?"

"I wouldn't accept any age. I don't want to know when I'm going to die," answered Stockdale with some alarm.

"Confound it, you aren't going to know. I'm just trying to show you what I am talking about. You don't think I can tell you how long you're going to live, do you?"

"No, nor when the war will end, either."

"Oh, well," observed Tresham with some indignation, "if you don't want to discuss a very pretty problem, don't."

"Let me try again," said Stockdale penitently. "You mean, if the choice were given me of remaining in uncertainty as to whether the war will end either soon or late, or of naming an absolutely certain date for its ending, how late a date would I be willing to fix for the sake of getting rid of the uncertainty?"

"That's it," agreed Tresham.

Stockdale consumed nearly an entire cigarette before he said, "February 1, 1919."

"You don't want much, do you?" asked Tresham. "Most people think the war can't end until the autumn of next year, even if everything goes on wheels."

"My date is February 1, 1919," repeated Stockdale firmly. "What's yours?"

"The first of July," answered Tresham promptly.

"Hello," exclaimed Stockdale, sitting bolt upright with surprise on the couch where he had been reclining. "What has converted the old croaker? I thought you swore by these military experts who dope things out in the newspapers and take anyone's head off who dares to think the war is going to end, — ever."

Stockdale, like most of the people in

Washington, had suffered acute depression in the heavy pall of gloom which hung over that city in the spring of 1918, — since that day in March, in fact, when the German hordes bent back the Allied line like a torrent bursting its dam. It was a time when one pounced upon the tiniest item of good news with avidity, and sought comfort in the talk of wrong-headed optimists. When Tresham, who always kept his feet on the ground, made the above startling admission, Stockdale's mercurial spirits soared upward as though they had been cast loose from a hundred ton anchor.

"That means, of course, that you think it will end earlier than the first of July," he went on, feeling for the moment almost as if the matter were settled.

"That's what it means," Tresham assented. "We're all scared to death just now at these drives. It's bad reading, and I hate to follow them on the map. But it's the last shot in Germany's locker. If she doesn't win now, and that's not going to happen, she'll begin to go, and when she goes it will be mighty fast. Look what happened after the battle of Jena."

"Good old Jena," agreed Stockdale.

"I've been talking about Jena ever since 1914."

"It's going to happen again," observed Tresham sagely.

"I hope so!" said Stockdale fervently. "But I can't seem to picture any finish to it."

"It is difficult," agreed Tresham. "I suppose that when the Germans have had enough they will ask for terms."

"The way Bethman Hollweg did in 1916? Good Lord, do you remember the way stocks went diving for the bottom?"

Tresham nodded grimly. "We're paying for our sins now," he said.

There was a moment's silence before Stockdale remarked, "It is going to be some job settling the peace terms."

Tresham nodded. "It is a tangle, of course," he said. "Still, I believe Germany would give up everything the Allies want now, except her hold in the East."

"Alsace-Lorraine and her Colonies?" queried Stockdale.

"I think so," said Tresham.

"How about the Hohenzollerns?" asked Stockdale after a little reflection.

"Up to the German people, and none

of our business. If they do what we want about outside matters, what do we care what kind of rulers or form of government they have? If they want the Hohenzollerns let them have them."

Stockdale shook his head. "You talk like the peace treaty of Vienna," he said. "You put the emphasis on the wrong places. The first thing Germany must do is to get rid of that gang of what I heard a fellow citizen of Italian extraction call 'Middle-Aged Despots.' Other questions come after that. The Colonies, for example, should n't go back to Germany, but be handed over to Brazil, Patagonia or some nation in the South Sea Islands, if there are any nations there, but not on any account to one of the Allies. I don't want to see any country come out of this war any better off in respect to territory than when she went into it. Perhaps Poland, I don't know anything about that; but there 's one great exception —Alsace-Lorraine to France."

"Why the exception?"

"Because it 's merely restoring stolen goods; because the French have been so magnificent; because a French officer I had lunch with yesterday was one of the best

fellows I've met in a long time. Put it down to any reason you want, but it ought to be done."

"It sure ought," agreed Tresham, "but where does your punishment for Germany come in?"

"I have always said," continued Stockdale, "that Germany's real punishment is going to come when the war is over. Germany is going to be punished, never you fear. There will be bills to pay, territory to be surrendered, and worst of all a realization by the German people, sooner or later, of their own rottenness. Germany set out to do something on which her whole vicious system was based, and she has failed. When that sinks in on the Germans, which it won't do thoroughly until after the war, they will get considerable punishment of the kind they need."

"Would n't you make it physically impossible for Germany to start war again?"

"As far as that can be done within reasonable limits. You can't keep a nation permanently in such condition that it can't fight; it has been tried and does n't work. But I agree that for fundamental reasons, and also in order to have something tan-

gible to point to, I should like to see a public execution of German militarism."

"How?" queried Tresham.

"It's German militarism we are fighting, and that is the thing which ought to be hit by the peace terms," said Stockdale, warming to his subject. "There would be no justice in piling on indemnities which would fall on generation after generation of German people who had nothing to do with the present affair. We don't want indemnities covering the entire cost of the war, even if we could get them. I read something in a book the other day which struck me as being sound. It was this: 'The more we beat Fritz by becoming like him, the more he wins after all.' We don't want to do that. Make Germany pay enough, no matter how much it takes, to restore Belgium and northern France, and to make good all damages to civilians elsewhere; make her give up Alsace-Lorraine and get out of Russia and the Balkans; and then go after German militarism. Now German militarism is represented in actual fact by things and by individuals. Of course, at bottom it's merely a vicious and insane idea, but nevertheless you can put

your hand on some very definite manifestations of the idea. My plan for dealing with German militarism is based on an old English law which has to do with deodands."

"What's a deodand?" asked Tresham, opening his eyes and starting out of a semi-doze. "Sounds like a bird."

"Well, it isn't a bird; it's this: Under the old common law, when a weapon, or in fact anything whatever, killed a man, that thing was forfeited to the crown as a deodand and put out of use forever. For instance, if you murdered a man with an axe, the crown could claim the axe; or if a cart ran over a man and killed him, the cart was a deodand and forfeited. The idea was that a thing could be bad, and that a bad thing ought to be punished."

"If I threw you out the window," asked Tresham, becoming interested, "and you landed on your head on the roof of the building below, is that building a deodand? I mean, under this old law?"

"I don't know," answered Stockdale, refusing to be diverted from his subject, "but I do know there was the same kind of law in Athens, way back in B.C. There what-

ever was the cause of a man's death was either exterminated or cast out of the dominions of the Republic."

"I only asked," said Tresham. "Go ahead."

"Well, I should treat all Germany's war material as deodand. After the peace conference I should get out a proclamation something like this: 'German militarism has been tried at the bar of nations, found guilty and condemned to death. The sentence will now be carried out as follows:

"'1. The German fleet, including every war vessel large or small, together with all guns and equipment, all other guns, rifles, small arms, ordnance, and munitions of every kind, and all air craft, shall be collected at designated points and totally destroyed.

"'2. The Krupp works at Essen every ordnance and munitions plant of every kind whatsoever, and all forts, fortresses, military posts, barracks, cantonments and camps within the German Empire, shall be razed to the ground and all their equipment totally destroyed.

"'3. One month after the completion of action provided for by Articles 1 and 2, the

Kaiser and the Crown Prince of Germany shall be placed on public trial for violation of the laws of God and man before a plenary court set up by the Allies.'"

Stockdale paused and turned towards his friend. "How's that?" he demanded.

"It won't be done," said Tresham.

"Probably not," agreed Stockdale, "but isn't it a good idea?"

"Not very, old top; it's too wasteful."

"Wasteful?" repeated Stockdale. "A few million dollars' worth of war stuff when millions of human beings have been killed? This reclamation work has certainly gone to your head, Phil."

"Why not turn over Germany's ships, guns and so forth to the Allies, instead of destroying them?" suggested Tresham.

"It wouldn't have the same effect. In the first place, it negatives the idea of disinterestedness on the part of the Allies. In the second place, it entirely misses the point."

"What is the point?"

"The point," said Stockdale, "is that the people of the world should be shown in a way they can understand that guns, munitions and war plants generally are bad

things; necessary evils at best and not to be allowed in the hands of people who can't be trusted to use them only for defensive purposes."

"You sound like a pacifist," said Tresham. "Are you?"

"I don't know what a pacifist is," answered Stockdale. He reflected a moment, smiled, and then went on, "'Pacifist' is a word that may mean as many things as a phrase which is discussed with considerable acumen in one of Anthony Hope's stories. 'Comedies of Courtship' is the name of the volume, but the name of the particular story I've forgotten. However, I know the discussion in question by heart."

"All right," assented Tresham, "I'll listen. Spring it."

"The hero had remarked to the heroine, 'When you gave me that kiss,' or words to that effect, and as the statement seemed to her an exaggeration, she became indignant. The author justifies his hero's use of the form of expression objected to on the ground that 'to give a kiss' may mean:

"'1. What it literally says—to bestow a kiss.

"'2. To offer one's self to be kissed.

"'3. To accept willingly a proffered kiss; and without much straining of words.

"'Merely to refrain from angry expostulation and rupture of acquaintance when one is kissed.'

"This last the heroine had done. It is much the same with 'pacifist.' The word may mean an individual who pats an intruder on the back during such period as the latter is slaughtering the pacifist's wife and children. In fact that is the familiar and classic illustration most frequently used. On the other hand, people talk about our pacifist President, a man who is carrying on war on a scale never before dreamed of in this country. If he is a pacifist, I hope I am. If a pacifist means a man who believes that the only lasting good that can come out of this war is something which will make other wars less likely, write me down a pacifist. I am one sure."

"Everyone is," said Tresham, after a moment's reflection. Presently he added, "Except a few old-style senators and half a dozen army officers, all good men too, who are living intellectually in the Middle Ages."

Stockdale got up, took a cigarette from

the box on the table, and went back to the couch.

"It's a good thing the country has got you and me to settle these difficult points for it," he remarked.

"Isn't it?" agreed Tresham. "I took a week's vacation before coming on here, after I wound up my job as Red Cross Field Director. Motor trip with my wife in Virginia. Went through lovely country, and had glorious weather; but I didn't enjoy it. Couldn't sag back; couldn't rest; could hardly sleep; felt all the time that until I got back on the job so I could keep in touch and worry about things properly that the war was going to the devil."

"I know," said Stockdale. "It's funny, isn't it?"

"Everybody's doing it," said Tresham defensively.

"Except Mixter," suggested Stockdale.

"Mixter is a curious combination," said Tresham, "full of sentiment and practical as a freight car. He works like the devil, enjoys himself in his off moments as though he were a child at its first party; doesn't worry, and gets more fun out of being decent

to the people he runs up against than anyone I know."

"In the housing problem in Washington," said Stockdale, "he beat the U. S. to it. Took a small apartment house way out on Fourteenth Street and has let it out piece meal to stranded stenographers. He loses ten thousand a year by that transaction."

"He's very rich," said Tresham in extenuation.

"So are lots of people who aren't doing it."

"I know. Mixter is all right. You don't have to tell me. Are you dining there tomorrow night, by any chance?"

"Yes, are you?"

"I am," answered Tresham. "It's at seven o'clock. Theatre party, I suppose." He yawned in an exaggerated fashion, and rubbed his eyes. "Are you spending the night here?" he asked with a grin.

"Oh, I'll go," exclaimed Stockdale. "I waste too much time on you, I admit, but I'm foolish and good-natured. Good-night."

"Good-night. See you in the morning. Don't dream of deodands or dodos or other fabulous monsters."

II

The party at Major and Mrs. Mixter's dinner had to break up into contingents in wending its way to the theatre. Miss Lovering, Miss Albert, Stockdale and Col. D'Estrey went down in the same cab. The last named was a gallant French officer who had lost his right arm at the battle of the Somme, and who had arrived in Washington shortly before, on a special mission. Tall, smooth-faced and black-haired, he looked very handsome in his sky-blue uniform.

The cab had drawn up to the curb and stopped in front of the Paoli Theatre, and Stockdale had half opened the door, when it dashed forward again at the speed of about forty miles an hour, and with a jerk that threw Miss Lovering forward into Stockdale's lap, while the gallant Frenchman found himself embracing Miss Albert in a manner which was none the less delightful because it was unexpected and sudden.

"What in the world," began Stockdale when the four occupants of the cab had become somewhat disentangled. He twisted

his head round and rapped at the window as the cab, having slackened its speed, described a loop and returned in the direction from which it had come.

"What do you think you are doing, driver?" he called out. "What's the trouble?"

The driver turned his head. "The President's car came up behind us, sir," he explained respectfully, "and I had to get out of the way."

"Oh, all right," said Stockdale, "we are willing to accord him precedence."

"Even in going to the theatre," said Miss Lovering with a smile.

"You said the President," exclaimed Col. D'Estrey, in much excitement. "You meant your President? The President of America? Wilson?"

"The very same," acknowledged Stockdale.

"I shall see that man?" went on Col. D'Estrey with increasing excitement. "He will be inside the theatre where we may look on him?"

The three Americans gazed at the gallant French officer, and each one of them was touched, yes, and made proud, by his almost

painful emotion. Miss Lovering made an effort to relieve the tension. "Why, Col. D'Estrey, you may see him at the theatre three or four nights every week," she remarked.

"Here we are," observed Stockdale as the cab drew up at the Paoli Theatre for the second time.

In the lobby they met Major and Mrs. Mixter, and the rest of the party, and all filed down the aisle to their seats in the third row. In an unobtrusive fashion Stockdale so manœuvered that he found himself sitting next to Miss Lovering. To sit next to Miss Lovering on the occasions on which they met since they had renewed their acquaintance at the Bartley's dinner some weeks before, had somehow become a fixed idea with Stockdale. Her high-bred beauty and alluring femininity had made her one of the most charming of mortals even in peace times. Now, beneath the somber clouds of war, she had for the first time in her life experienced emotions which stirred her to the depths of her being, and made her wholesome, unselfish nature expand and blossom forth like a rose in June. An unsuspected love for her fellow creatures shone forth from blue eyes

that had formerly looked on the world with a somewhat haughty gaze. On Miss Lovering's other side was Col. D'Estrey.

"There is the President, just above us," she remarked, indicating the box on the left draped with the American flag.

Col. D'Estrey raised his eyes and saw, sitting in the front of the box, a smooth-faced man wearing eye-glasses. The face was intellectual, indeed almost ascetic. He sat back in his chair with the poise of conscious strength, and his heavily hung under jaw betokened resolute purpose. His right hand rested motionless on the plush-covered railing of the box. Near him, in front, sat a pleasant-faced old lady with white hair, and further back were two younger women.

Col. D'Estrey looked long and reverently. He gave a deep sigh of satisfaction. "I have seen him," he said solemnly to Miss Lovering.

The play was called "Getting Together." It was a jumble of unconnected scenes of war-time episodes in France, treated in light fashion, and was calculated to interest and amuse one who, like Col. D'Estrey, had spent much time at the front. But, except during the singing of a catchy ditty called

"Keep your head down, Fritzy boy," Col. D'Estrey's eyes remained fastened on the box at the left.

Between the acts Miss Lovering turned to him and asked, "Well, what do you think of him? Is he like his pictures?"

Stockdale leaned forward to hear the reply. He was vastly interested, and wanted to know the frank opinion of this brave representative of glorious France.

"He does look like his pictures," said Col. D'Estrey to Miss Lovering and Stockdale, "only finer and stronger; just as I imagined him. For nearly three years I have been in the trenches and have fought as well as I knew how for my beloved and suffering country. We have been fighting to save our nation, for its right to exist, for its very life. We shall never give in, even if we are all killed, but we can do little more. France is nearing exhaustion. It is your young and strong nation which must turn the scale. You do not know the gratitude France feels to your country, nor the hope which fills her aching heart with a new joy now that America has come to our aid. You do not know, you cannot know, how we regard your President. We have

been fighting, I say, to save France, but until your President spoke we did not know the larger purpose for which our sacrifices have been made. He has made clear to every one of our poilus that we have fought, and our dead have died, not for France alone but for humanity, for the whole world. It is his voice which has made doubtful things clear. He has told us what we are fighting for. I wish we had in France someone to speak for us, as he has done for you. We have good men and strong men, so has England; but those of us who have lived in the trenches and seen our comrades and friends fall around us in battle, all look to your President to express what we have felt and feel. Whenever I pass the White House I say, 'It is from there that peace will come; a peace of justice which will yet heal the world.' I do not believe you understand what your President means to us."

Miss Lovering's eyes were shining. Without the slightest attempt at concealment, she took Col. D'Estrey's left hand, his only one, in hers and held it while she said, "We will understand better after what you have told us."

Tresham and Stockdale met for a moment on the way out after the play was over.

"Perhaps, Phil," observed the latter, "we might leave the settling of the peace terms to that gentleman who occupied the lower left-hand box. From something I happened to hear tonight, I think that might satisfy the world as well as if we continued to do it."

"And you and I concentrate on our own business?" queried Tresham. "That's a brand-new idea, but I'm not sure it is a bad one. Let's try it."

Habit, however, as Prof. William James has observed, is the great conservative flywheel of society and resents innovations.

The next evening in Tresham's rooms, after much rambling conversation, Stockdale rose and looked out the window towards the lights of the State, War and Navy building. He turned back to the room and remarked, "How would it do to put the German Colonies under a sort of protectorate and let them work out to independence, the way we are doing with the Philippines?" And in five minutes he and Tresham were hard at work again, settling the peace terms.

SHIPBUILDERS

SHIPBUILDERS

I

"IT reminds me of the tapir story," observed Peter Carton thoughtfully, as he paused in his labors to lean back and light a cigarette.

"What's the tapir story?" queried Jones, chief assistant in the division of Passenger Transportation. "Tell it."

"Oh, it's long and needs a down-east accent, and has n't any point anyhow," objected Carton. After a moment's pause he went on, "A down-east sailor man, just returned stiff with brine from a two years' voyage, met up with the proprietor of a menagerie at the boarding-house to which he repaired, and the two at once became friends. The menagerie man confided that he had two tapirs stored away in the cellar of the boarding-house at that moment, and asked the sailor man to come down with him and hold a lamp while he fed them. But when the two got to the cellar it ap-

peared the tapirs had broken loose, and the menagerie man besought his new friend to aid in returning them to captivity. The latter gave one terrified look at the long snout and generally unlovely aspect of the nearest tapir, who was rapidly proceeding in his direction and, dropping the lamp with a crash, made for the cellar stairs. 'I signed on to hold a lamp,' he called back. 'I didn't sign on to hunt tapirs.'"

"Well?" queried Jones, patiently.

"Oh, that isn't the story," admitted Carton. "At least it's only one small end of it, but somehow it reminded me of myself. When I gave up my law business to come down here with the Emergency Fleet Corporation, I expected Mr. Schwab would call me into his office once or twice a day and say: 'Mr. Carton, kindly prepare a contract for the construction of this twenty thousand ton troopship,' and I would answer, 'Leave it to me, Mr. Schwab, that troopship is as good as built.' Then I would dash back to my office, summon a stenographer and remark, 'In consideration of the mutual promises and agreements herein contained, it is mutually promised and agreed by the parties hereto as follows: One — The Blank

Company, hereinafter called the Contractor, shall build a twenty thousand ton troopship, according to the following specifications, to wit: quality A1. Time P. D. Q. Two—The U. S. shall pay for the same if, as, and when it sees fit,' or words to that effect. Of course, Mr. Schwab or Mr. Hurley would get the credit, but I would have the satisfaction of knowing I had really done the job."

"I wish you lawyers would draw contracts like that," said Jones longingly, "then someone could tell what you meant."

"Tell what we meant!" repeated Carton indignantly. "What would become of you capable business men without lawyers, I'd like to know? You run around, very busy, like a lot of chickens with their heads chopped off, and get things in a pretty tangle; then we come in and smooth them out, and before you know it everything goes like clock-work."

"Lawyers are a fine lot, no doubt," conceded Jones. He paused a moment and added, "I've always thought that there was only one trouble with them; they ought to be put to work."

Carton did not deign to notice the im-

plication, but resumed his previous train of thought.

"As a matter of fact," he continued, "I've hardly heard the word 'ship' mentioned since I've been here. What have I been doing, for instance, for the last three months? Wrangling about car-fares on street railways, discussing feeders, power-houses, loops, 3A copper wire, voltage and what not. I didn't know I had signed on to hunt tapirs."

"It all helps," observed Jones encouragingly.

"I suppose it does," admitted Carton, "but the house that Jack built was nothing to it." He tapped himself on the breast and recited: "This is the man that drew the agreement that called for the tracks that carried the cars that ran to the house that sheltered the man that drove the rivets that held together the wonderful ship that Schwab built."

"You're leaving out a good deal at that," observed Jones. "How about sewerage, water, electric lights, and the other things?"

"I know," agreed Carton. "I was only touching on my personal endeavors. Have

you been out to the National Shipbuilding Company's plant at Camden lately?"

"Not for four weeks."

"A lot can happen in four weeks nowdays. I spent yesterday morning there. I didn't pay much attention to the eight new ways they are putting in, because my job took me out to the housing development. They're building a complete city two miles back in the country. It is great; the neatest little brick houses you ever saw, a church, a community center and a movie theatre. It was an eye-opener to me."

"There is nothing picayune about the way the U. S. is going into the shipbuilding business certainly," agreed Jones. "Go out to Hog Island the first chance you get."

"I mean to if I ever get your street railway messes straightened out. Is Barker coming in this morning?"

Jones nodded. "That's what I'm here for; he's due now."

"That is the worst crowd we've run up against yet," observed Carton. "I am afraid we shall have to take over that road and run it."

"It will mean a lot of lost time," said Jones regretfully, "but I suppose there is

no help for it. They won't agree to anything."

"Of course, the road is in the hands of a Receiver, and that does make a difference," said Carton. "Technically, at least, they have got to get the court's consent to anything they do."

"Have one more try this morning, at any rate," urged Jones. "If we have to run the road ourselves it will delay matters three or four months at least."

There was a knock at the door, followed by the appearance of a wide awake looking office boy who said, "Mr. Barker and Mr. Meekin say they have an appointment with you, sir."

"Bring them up," remarked Carton. He gazed out the window, down to where the City Hall of Philadelphia, surmounted by the monster statue of William Penn, sprawls over Broad Street like some uncouth creation of a mind distraught. To Carton it suggested an illustration by Doré of a scene in Dante's Inferno, and a sigh of gloom escaped his lips before he turned to Jones and said, "We'll give it to them straight this morning and get it settled one way or the other."

"Mr. Barker, Mr. Meekin," announced the office boy, throwing open the door.

A tall red-haired man with heavy moustache and snapping bright blue eyes, accompanied by a small, ferret-faced, grey-haired individual, entered the room. They were the Receiver of the United Service Street Railway Company of New York and his counsel.

"I wish it could be arranged," said the latter tartly, "so that we did n't have to wait downstairs twenty minutes when we have an appointment here."

"I 'm sorry, Mr. Meekin," said Carton politely, "but I am afraid the rules of the Emergency Fleet Corporation can't be altered for the benefit of individuals."

The two men sat down and looked at Carton with expressions of aggressive obstinancy.

"Well, what have we got to do?" asked Barker finally, calling to his aid the most disagreeable tones of which he was capable. "Tell us the worst and get it over with. If the government desires to impose such conditions on the United Service Street Railway that it can never get on its feet again, I suppose we 've got to submit."

"It's a funny thing," remarked Mr. Meekin, his little eyes gleaming maliciously, "The country was told we went into this war as a protest against autocracy, and here's our own government giving orders and doing things never heard of in a free country. A man can't call his soul his own, much less his business."

"And most of the orders are being given by green men, amateurs, who have had no experience, and don't know what they are talking about," said Mr. Barker with meaning.

Carton smiled pleasantly. "I don't wonder you gentlemen are a trifle upset this morning," he said. "You've had a surprise, haven't you? You thought you could go right over the heads of the Passenger Transportation Division and myself, and work something with Mr. Schwab directly. You tried that yesterday, and he refused to have anything to do with you, and sent you back to us. That's a fact, isn't it?"

"We are doing our best to keep a valuable property committed to our charge by the court from being ruined," said Mr. Meekin savagely.

"Stop this buncombe and hot air,

Meekin," said Carton sharply, "we have had enough of it and are n't going to waste time listening to any more. We offer you a trade that is a benefit to your road, and you know it as well as I do. What you want is to get more out of the United States than you are entitled to. You can't do it, and you ought to be ashamed of yourselves for wanting to do it."

"Look here," said Mr. Barker, starting up, "I won't listen to this kind of talk!"

"Oh, yes, you will," went on Carton, a hard glint coming into his eyes. "You would listen to anything rather than have that street railway of yours taken out of your hands. I know you. You're bluffing. Now unless we reach an agreement this morning the Emergency Fleet Corporation is going to take the United Service Railway Company and operate it under the authority of Section 28 of the Emergency Deficiency Act."

"Perhaps the court will have something to say to that," suggested Mr. Meekin with a sneer.

"You know more law than that, Mr. Meekin," said Carton genially. "The court won't lift a finger if we decide to

take the road. But you've both made up your minds that you don't want that done, and are going to reach an agreement pleasantly and then urge the court to confirm it."

Barker and Meekin sat silent.

"Why can't you be nice and friendly about it, the way everyone else is?" continued Carton. "I've put through agreements with twenty other roads, and you are the only people who haven't been anxious to coöperate."

"What do you want us to do?" repeated Mr. Barker querulously. "As I said before, tell us the worst."

"Oh, the worst, as you call it," said Carton, "is good; really very good indeed. The Blackstone Shipbuilding Company, the Brevoot Windlass Company and the Naylor Construction Company, all located at Holbrook, N. Y., and all building ships for the government, have taken on altogether, — how many new men, Mr. Jones?"

"Roughly, five thousand," said Jones, "not less at any rate."

"Have taken on five thousand new men," repeated Carton. "There are no accommodations for them in Holbrook, the town is full, — chock-a-block, — and they have to

go to and fro from Stoughton, Brookfield and Rockbridge, places reached by the United Service Railway. The men have been threatening to strike for the last two weeks, because the car service is intolerable. You know how bad it is better than I can tell you. Our experts, not amateurs as you call them, but some of the best street railway men in America, have been over the ground and decided what is needed. We want you to put on twenty-four new-style cars, equipped so they can be operated in trains; to build turnouts at specified places so you can run more cars; to increase your power plant and put in new transmission lines, and — well, those are the principal things, but it's all in this contract which I have prepared."

"Where is the money coming from?" inquired Mr. Meekin.

"Don't play ignorance," said Carton, "the money is coming from the United States, by way of the Emergency Fleet Corporation; and you are going to pay back only a part of it, — seventy-five per cent. The other quarter is a clear gift. You have got to give us security, Receiver's certificates, for the amount you are to re-

turn, but the United Service Company is getting increased facilities over the bargain counter."

"We would rather not add to the road's obligation, even for a bargain," began Mr. Barker.

Carton ignored the remark entirely. "Are you ready to sign?" he asked, indicating certain papers on his desk.

Mr. Barker and Mr. Meekin consulted apart. "We will sign," said the latter, after an interval of five minutes. "But it's no good unless the court confirms it."

"Oh, we can take care of the court between us," observed Carton optimistically.

"I'm not so sure of that," said Mr. Meekin. As a busy street railway lawyer he had engaged in too many controversies to find joy in prolonging one after it was settled, and he spoke pleasantly and in good faith. "You don't know Judge Hayselden; the Receivership is in his court. He is old and fussy and fidgety, and he hates to take the responsibility of letting a Receiver do anything. I don't think he will take kindly to such an increase in indebtedness, and I know he won't stand for the issue of Receiver's certificates."

"Is his consent really necessary?" queried Jones.

"I am afraid it is," admitted Carton. "Look here, Meekin, are you going to do your best to get the agreement confirmed?"

Mr. Meekin drew out his watch. "I've given my word," he said. "We've just got time to catch the twelve-o'clock train back to New York. Come with me, and we'll see him in Chambers this afternoon."

II

Carton got back to Philadelphia at six o'clock that afternoon and went directly to the office of Mr. Hodges, Chief of the Passenger Transportation Division of the Emergency Fleet Corporation. The big twelve-story building was still humming with the industry of a beehive, although under the rules employees were permitted to call it a day's work when the hour of five o'clock struck. Mr. Hodges and his principal assistant, Mr. Jones, were sitting at opposite sides of the large desk table, hard at work on a plan for bettering transportation by ferry to a shipbuilding plant on the Great Lakes.

"Hullo, what's the good word?" asked Mr. Hodges, looking up on Carton's entrance.

Carton flung his hat into a chair viciously, plumped down in another himself, raised his clenched fists and uttered the monosyllable "Damn!"

"Take it easy, old man," remarked Mr. Hodges genially, losing none of his imperturbability. "What's the matter? Did Meekin squeal on his agreement?"

"No; Meekin was all right, but that old devil bird of a Judge!"

"Would n't he confirm the agreement?" asked Jones. Carton gazed at the speaker, incredulous that he could ask such a question.

"Confirm the agreement?" he repeated. "He almost committed me for contempt of court. Said he never heard of such a proposition as permitting a road that could n't pay its present debts to pile up more. Said there was no use bringing such nonsense before him. When I told him these were war times, he asked me if I thought he was going to write himself down in his court records as an ass, just because a war was going on." Carton paused, and then added

indignantly, "I could n't budge the old villain."

"Did you tell him we could take the road over?" suggested Mr. Jones.

Carton laughed. "I tried that for all it was worth," he answered, "and it was n't worth a cent. He said that was the best thing we could do; that it would relieve him of all responsibility; in short, that it would suit him right down to the ground."

"It must be that he does n't understand this country is actually in the war," suggested Mr. Hodges thoughtfully. "He does n't realize it."

"The only way to make him realize it," said Carton with conviction, "would be to ram him into a ten-inch gun and fire him off on the western front."

"How did you leave matters with Meekin?" queried Jones.

"After Judge Hayselden had warned me that I must n't continue my current line of conversation, I asked for an order of notice so that the matter could come up in open court, and he would have to go on record. He gave me one for tomorrow at eleven, but the last thing he did was to order Meekin to bring in all the cases he could

collect showing that courts had refused to authorize agreements such as the one we submitted."

"They say there is no sense in throwing good money after bad, and I don't see any in wasting precious time when it won't do any good," observed Mr. Hodges. "Why not drop the matter and start on the other tack? Taking the road over, I mean. It's hardly worth while for you to make another trip to New York."

"You aren't beaten until you know you are licked," said Carton stubbornly. "I shall go to that hearing tomorrow. There isn't any law on the matter; not on our side, at least. But I shall do something; probably argue on the facts and broad grounds of public policy." He smiled and added, "And you be ready to bail me out in case of need."

"Just as you like," agreed Mr. Hodges. He turned to his chief assistant. "Courts are a great help in business matters, aren't they, Jones? Who was the genius who spoke of 'old father antic the law'?"

After dinner that evening, at the small house in the country out on "the main line," where he lived with two other Fleet

workers, Carton took his customary stroll around the grounds of Bryn Mawr College. The long, low-lying grey-stone buildings with mullioned windows and covered with ivy were as lovely as the finest that Oxford could produce. Carton sat for an hour on a stone bench overlooking acres of velvet lawn, deep in thought. He was not engaged in the preparation of his coming address to the Court on the morrow, but picturing in his mind's eye scenes called up by a letter he had found on his return home, a letter from a young friend somewhere in France.

III

"The court," announced the crier in stentorian tones. Counsel sitting at the table inside the bar below the clerk's desk rose and stood respectfully as Judge Hayselden, preceded by a red-faced court officer in blue frock coat with brass buttons carrying a white staff, himself clad in his black robe of office, entered and took his seat. He was a very old man, very tall and very thin. His white hair was brushed straight back from his high forehead. His keen eyes still burned brightly under shaggy eyebrows.

His manner was peremptory and his voice sharp and clear as he said: "In the matter of this petition asking for confirmation of an agreement between the United States and the Receiver of the United States Railway Company, I desire counsel to submit authorities. Mr. Meekin, I will hear from you."

Mr. Meekin rose. He was a little terrier of a man, with many of a terrier's propensities, but his word once given was as good as his bond.

"Your Honor," he said, "representing the receiver, I assent to confirmation of the agreement."

"Have you any cases where such agreements have been sanctioned?"

"I have not, Your Honor."

"Have you any authorities where the court has refused to sanction such agreements?"

Mr. Meekin looked at Carton.

"Go ahead," consented the latter in a whisper, "let him have them."

Meekin read a list of twenty or more cases, giving citations and brief abstracts as he went along. As the weight of the law piled up against him, Carton became

slightly restive. The argument he had carefully been thinking out on the train from Philadelphia, began to seem too weak even for utterance. Unconsciously his hand slipped into the side pocket of his coat, and his fingers closed on the letter he had received the previous evening.

"Mr. Carton," said His Honor, "if you have any authorities to submit, you may do so."

"I have something to submit, Your Honor," said Carton, rising.

"What is the citation?" asked the Judge, as he dipped his pen in the ink before him.

"It is not in the books, Your Honor."

"Some decision not yet reported?" demanded the Judge.

"It is not a decision, Your Honor. It is a letter which I received last night from a young friend of mine in France."

The Judge looked at Carton sternly. "I allow great latitude to counsel in this court," he remarked, "but—" He paused, then threw himself back in his chair and added, "Proceed."

"The letter is dated June 10th," said Carton. "It is as follows." He read slowly:

DEAR MR. CARTON:

Please pardon this paper — it 's all I have just now. How time slips by in an unbelievable way. It seems hardly possible that it was over a year ago that you recommended me for the training camp. I confess things have moved with startling rapidity; much quicker than any of us anticipated.

I got your good letter and mighty glad I was to hear from you. You don't know what it means to get news from home. I am glad you have gone in for war work and think the Shipping Board must be very interesting. I was talking with my Colonel the other day, and he said Gen. Pershing declared at a meeting of officers recently that we would be able to walk right through the Germans next year if we could get enough men and supplies across the water, and that the great need of the war now was ships, and more ships. So you see you can feel you 've got a hand in what over here is regarded as of perhaps first importance.

But, speaking generally, I can't help feeling that not all the people at home realize the true state of affairs or understand what is going on. I often wonder just what there is that will get it across to the folks in the States. Beyond a depression in business, some inconvenience and a few personal links here and there, what does it mean? I don't know. And I 'm searching every scrap of information I can get to find out. All of us are. So are the French.

The Germans are not beaten. Do you realize

that? And do all the people at home realize it? They must before we can come out of this war victorious. The power of Germany's military machine, the strength of its organization, is something you have got to see and feel before you can grasp the terror of it. I don't mean we are afraid, not even I am that. But I 've just come back to a rest camp from two weeks in the front trenches, and the threat of the Hun hordes won't let me sleep at night. We were in a sector where the German trenches were very close to ours. We could feel them there all the time, like some evil presence, and one day they came over the top at us, wave after wave of silent grey-clad men. It was not like anything human. It was a miasma, a mist, a noxious vapor let loose to corrupt and destroy the world. We managed to hold our ground, but it was truly some job. Tom Meany was killed, blown to pieces in the preliminary barrage; and Bill Simpkins, you know them both. Simpkins was bayoneted through the breast, after he had done for three of the Fritzes. I got out without a scratch. I can't wait to go back again, — honestly. I want to live as much as anyone, but I 'd die a thousand times rather than have that wicked nightmare of German militarism impose its rule on the world. That has got to be stopped; and nothing else matters, nothing else in the world. I 'm afraid you 'll think I am talking heroics, but you would n't if you were here. It is merely the way everyone of us feels. I have lived for a long while

in all this. For some months I have really never been out of earshot of the guns, and have been in a part of France where one never sees a smile. Nothing exists but war, not one smallest detail of life is free from the blight of it. It is tremendously depressing and all very pitiful; crops ripening and being burnt up by shells and killed by gas; villages shot to pieces and melting away into bits of filth and rubbish; old people carrying a few possessions and wandering from village to village, without any special hope or plan.

I like to think that nothing that can speed up the machinery and grease the wheels is being left undone. Occasionally one reads of strikes, and I 've often wished that the promoters of same could be here, just for a few days, just long enough to know what it means and long enough to see and appreciate the infinite possibilities of being thrown away through a slip of the cogs at home.

Write me again soon, and I 'll answer it, — if I can.

Yours as always,
HENRY LYALL.

P.S. Hurry up those ships, old man.

There was a moment's silence in the courtroom.

"Mr. Carton," said the Judge, his eyes fixed on the opposite wall where hung the arms of the United States, "have you prepared a decree?"

"I have, Your Honor," said Carton.

"Mr. Meekin," continued the court, "do you wish to examine the decree before I allow it?"

Meekin rose and blew his nose violently. "As counsel for the Receiver, Your Honor," he said, in a voice which broke a little, "I urge the allowance of any decree in behalf of the United States which Mr. Carton has prepared."

"That is well," said the Judge.

He took the paper passed up to him by the Clerk, and the pen scratched as his trembling old fingers affixed his signature.

"Mr. Clerk, that is entered as of today."

The old Judge rose from his chair and stood erect, gathering the folds of his gown around his spare figure. "Mr. Carton," he said, with eyes still fixed on the seal of his country, "when you answer that letter, —" he paused, and the thin old lips trembled so that for the moment he could not go on. "When you answer the letter," he resumed, "tell that boy that the people over here, even the worn-out old fossils, are beginning to understand."

The Judge stood silent for a moment. He lowered his gaze from the opposite wall

and his eyes flashing, sought those of Carton. He smiled whimsically.

"Hurry up those ships, old man," he said. "Mr. Crier, adjourn the court."

ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTEEN IN THE SHADE

ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTEEN IN THE SHADE

MAJOR MIXTER of the Signal Corps lived in a fine house on New Hampshire Avenue. It was one of the few residences in the heart of Washington which had a garden of its own. The garden ran along one side of the house and reaching to the sidewalk was there terminated by a tall fence with iron railings. What rent the Major paid was the business of nobody but himself, but it was sufficient. The congressional resolution against rent profiteering was not of much help to the wealthy sojourner doing war work in Washington, whether in the Service or out of it; very likely it was not intended to be so. Stockdale was dining with Major Mixter that August evening. As a matter of fact, he had got far beyond the point of caring with whom he dined, or whether he dined at all. For three days the thermometer had ranged from 105 to 114 degrees in the shade,

and that afternoon in Stockdale's office it had touched 120.

At ten minutes to eight Stockdale called a cab, gave the address to the shirt-sleeved driver and sank back on the seat in a state which bordered on frenzy. The heat from the asphalt pavements flew up and struck him in the face like a blow. His eyes burned as with a fever, and he closed them tightly. In air reeking with humidity he panted for breath.

Presently the cab stopped. Stockdale opened his eyes and got out.

"Tough weather," he remarked to the driver, as he handed over a generous tip in addition to the fare demanded.

"Good Lord," said the driver, wiping his brow with the back of his hand, "it's awful. I haven't slept two hours the last three nights."

"Me too," observed Stockdale sympathetically. "Take care of yourself now, and don't get knocked out for the sake of a few dollars."

"I won't," said the driver with emphasis. "I'm through for the day. Good-night."

There was not much of liberty or equality during the hot days of the summer of 1918

in Washington perhaps, but there was a wide-spread feeling of genuine fraternity among fellow sufferers of all sorts and classes.

Stockdale handed his hat to the butler who opened the door, and proceeded upstairs to the library. He found himself one of a party of six. There was his host, his host's two house guests, — Lieut. William Eccles, U. S. N., and Reginald Barton of our diplomatic corps, who was awaiting in Washington orders from the State Department which should send him to his new post as Minister to Bolivia; then there was Col. Colt of the Ordnance Department, and Major Wargrave, a British Staff Officer on duty in Washington as a member of the British Military Mission.

"We've just got to take it as a joke," Mixter was saying. "You can't look on it as anything else. It's the record for Washington, and Washington is supposed to be only separated from hell by a piece of brown paper in Summer at any time. Did you know that the automatic sprinklers in three different buildings were set off by the heat this afternoon? That's something to write home to the family! Take off your coat,

Stockdale; this is no night for ceremony; glad to see you. We'll have a little bridge after dinner, and forget it."

"How do, Mixter," said Stockdale, shaking hands, "I'll do just that, and roll up my sleeves too if you don't mind."

"Go as far as you like," answered his host genially. "We'll all strip to the buff before we get through." He, Eccles and Barton, as well as Stockdale, were clad in white flannel trousers, white shirts and no coats. Colt, having had to pass through the streets, had not dared to do so without being in uniform, and Major Wargrave had thought it would not be proper to bring mufti to this country, though since his arrival here he had learned better as to that and other things.

"Dinner is served, Major," said the butler, appearing at the double door opening into the hall.

"All right, Kenny," said Major Mixter. "Wait a moment." He turned to his guests. "Cocktails?"

"Lord, no!" came an answering chorus, followed by exclamations. "Cocktails on a night like this!" and "Not on your life!"

"I thought not," said Mixter, "that's

why I did n't have them ready. Come on, Wargrave, a bit to eat will buck us up."

"I recollect crossing the African desert one summer," said Barton, lighting a cigarette after the first course of cold bouillon had been taken away, "and the heat from the sands came up and biffed you just the way it does on the streets here today." He paused and inhaled a breath of cigarette smoke before going on. "But the difference is, it rather cooled off at night on the desert, while here it works up to a climax."

"What else are we having for dinner, Kenny," asked Major Mixter, as soft shelled crabs were put on the table. The butler coughed behind his hand in apologetic fashion. "Well, Sir," he said, "roast beef."

"Roast beef," exclaimed Mixter, "I can't bear it!"

"I should say not," agreed Eccles. He was Mixter's intimate friend, and had lived with him since their wives had departed from Washington in the late Spring, and consequently felt quite at home. "Is n't there anything else in the house?"

"For God's sake, Kenny, ask the cook to dig up something cool, or something light

anyhow," said Major Mixter. He turned to his guests. "As a Maine guide of mine once remarked, 'If we had some ham we could have some ham and eggs, if we had some eggs.'"

Stockdale grinned appreciatively. "Was that the guide who after coming out second best in an encounter with a fox said, 'By golly, that fellow is well named!'"

For a moment Major Wargrave looked a trifle bewildered at the laugh that ensued, then his face beamed with smiles and he said: "By Jove, you know, I never thought of that before. Clever chap that guide. I've hunted at home since I was a youngster, and the fox *is* a deucedly well-named animal. Full of tricks, you know, and all that sort of thing."

"Carry on," said Stockdale, in a whisper, to Eccles who sat next to him.

"I'll do my bit," answered Eccles in the same tone. He turned a serious face to Wargrave and remarked, "Quite right, Major, foxes are subtle creatures."

"Clever chap that guide," repeated Wargrave with conviction.

"When do you expect to go over?" asked Mixter, turning to Colt. "Soon, isn't it?"

"Goodness knows," answered the Colonel. "I had my orders three weeks ago. Got everything ready; said farewell to my family; got as far as the pier at Hoboken, when I was handed orders bringing me back here."

"Did you really get to Hoboken?" asked Eccles, who had just been promoted to the rank of full Lieutenant from that of Lieutenant Junior Grade. "That is a good deal nearer the sea than I've got."

Mixter suddenly stared with set gaze at the row of windows opening on to the garden. "Hold up a minute," he said in tones of tense excitement, "I think I see some air stirring."

Six pairs of eyes concentrated on the muslin window curtains. "That one moved a little bit," exclaimed Stockdale. "I saw it."

Barton rose and peered out the window. "False alarm," he remarked, turning back after a prolonged inspection. "There's not a leaf stirring. It looks as though we might have a thunder storm though."

"Good Lord, then it really will begin to heat up," observed Eccles in despairing tones.

"Begin to heat up?" asked Major Wargrave incredulously.

Colt turned to him. "You see," he explained, "thunder storms in Washington don't cool the air the way they do in other places. They just suck out the last remaining bit of life there is in it, and leave you in a sort of vacuum."

"Ah, I see," said Wargrave. He did not look wholly happy. "Haven't I heard," he went on with considerable pertinence, "that you Americans call the British climate beastly?"

"Very well put, old fellow," admitted Mixter, "you've got us this time. Kenny, bring the coffee and cigars to the library."

"No bridge for me," observed Stockdale, throwing himself at full length on one of the three huge chintz-covered sofas in the enormous library. "I've had a hard day. Old Gish kept me going over contracts until six-thirty."

"Nor for me either," said Eccles, lighting a cigar and sinking into a big easy-chair. "I prefer to meditate."

"It's a bad habit," said Mixter, "but it leaves things cosy and comfortable for the

rest of us. Cut for partners. You and I, Wargrave; and it's Colt's deal."

For an hour the game went on. Thunder rumbled, lightning flashed, and presently the rain began to come down.

"If I could only have a cold bath once a day," observed Eccles in dreamy tones, "I believe I would get along finely."

Major Wargrave looked up from his cards with sudden interest. "By Jove," he remarked, "that's perfectly right. The cold water in my tub runs tepid; absolutely tepid, you know."

"Of course it does," said Mixter. "There's no such thing as cold water in Washington in summer. It's either hot or lukewarm."

Eccles strolled to the window and looked out. "I say, Jack," he observed, "those bushes by the garden fence look as though they were about six feet high."

"Well, what of it?" demanded Mixter, who was playing both hands in a no trumper.

"I don't believe you can see into the garden from the street," continued Eccles, still looking out, "at least not unless you get up on a ladder."

"What of it?" repeated Mixter.

Eccles walked over to Stockdale. "Want to have a cold bath," he asked; "that is, reasonably cold?"

Stockdale swung himself up to a sitting position. "Where?" he demanded.

"In the garden," answered Eccles, showing a certain amount of excitement. "We'll go out and stand round in the rain and get cooled off and refreshed and so forth."

"I'm with you," said Stockdale, rising to his feet.

"They won't really do it, will they?" asked Wargrave of Mixter in low tones.

"Highly likely, I think," returned the other aloud. "These navy men are full of deviltry, you know."

"That's all right, Jack," remarked Eccles, wagging his head, "don't you worry; it's not your party, you know. You all stay right here and sweat; it's fine for you."

He pressed the electric bell and the butler appeared. "Bring two bath-towels down to the hall below, Kenny," he said briskly. "Come on, Stockdale."

The two descended the stairs, undressed with great rapidity and stepped out through the door-window into the garden. There

was silence for a few moments, and then Stockdale observed, "It *is* rather cool,—what there is of it."

"What there is of it, is right," answered Eccles, who stood with hands on knees and back arched, in an endeavor to expose as wide an area of his person as possible to the elements, "but what's the matter?" He gazed skyward. "It's raining hard and yet the drops seem to dodge me."

"Perhaps we aren't in far enough," suggested Stockdale. "You have to wade out, you know, to get wet all over."

"Let's take hold of hands and jump up and down, the way the old ladies do when they're about knee deep," said Eccles.

"Bully idea," agreed Stockdale. "I bet that will do the business."

The two clasped hands and, alternately squatting and rising, danced over a considerable extent of the garden's surface.

"'Now we go round the mulberry bush,'" sang Stockdale. "Are you getting wet, old top?"

"My back is damp," exclaimed Stockdale exultantly. "Upsy daisy, now, here comes a big one."

"A mighty good swim," said Stockdale

five minutes later. "I'm wet and I'm cool; that is," he added, "moderately so."

"What did I tell you!" exclaimed Eccles triumphantly, as he rubbed himself vigorously with a huge crash towel. "Put your trust in a light-hearted sailor man and you can't go far wrong.

"'There's a sweet little cherub
Who sits up aloft
To look out for the life of poor Jack!'"

The two dressed leisurely and ascended to the library in time to hear a vigorous ring at the front doorbell.

In a moment or two Kenny appeared and said: "Captain Black and Captain White of the Army Intelligence Department to see you, Major."

"Bring 'em up," said Mixter, shuffling the cards for the next deal.

"Who are they? Do you know them, Jack?" queried Eccles.

"I know lots of people," answered Mixter enigmatically, "lots and lots of people."

Captain Black and Captain White appeared in the doorway, two young men in uniform, twenty-three or twenty-four years old.

"Come in," called Major Mixter over his shoulder. "Excuse me for not getting up; but, as you see, I'm in the middle of a game. Make yourself at home. Will you have something to smoke?"

Captain White and Captain Black entered the room, but stood erect near the door. Each was perspiring profusely, but both looked keen and intent on the business in hand. "Major Mixter," said the latter, "we came in to ask permission to search your house." His tone was courteous, but it implied very clearly that if the permission were not forthcoming the representatives of the Intelligence Department could get along very well without it.

"Search away," assented Mixter coolly, though he raised his eye-brows a trifle. "Is it fair to ask what you are looking for?"

Captain White and Captain Black consulted in undertones. Captain White spoke. "I don't believe there is any harm in saying we're after two escaped German prisoners. They got away from Camp Meigs this afternoon."

"Camp Meigs," observed Mixter thoughtfully. "That's just on the outskirts of Washington, isn't it?"

"It is," said Captain Black, taking up the tale. "These two men passed the guard somehow or other, and cleared out, leaving their clothes behind them,—to avoid recognition, we suppose. It is believed they are somewhere in this city."

"What, without clothes?" demanded Mixter.

"It seems incredible," admitted Captain White, "but there's no doubt they left everything; and the point is, that Captain Black and I are sure we saw two naked men in your garden not half an hour ago."

Major Wargrave started to say something, but he was interrupted by Stockdale, whose trained legal instinct had already scented trouble ahead. "What makes you think these men you saw in Major Mixter's garden, if you saw any, were your Germans?" he asked.

"Who else could it have been?" demanded Captain Black, with some heat. "Who else would make such a display of themselves?"

"There's a city ordinance against that sort of thing," went on Captain White. "It provides the penalty of a jail sentence, without option of a fine. As a matter of fact,

our Department has orders to assist in the enforcement of all local ordinances, and if these men were n't the Germans, well — we 're after them just the same. However, we believe they were the Germans. No one else would take such a risk, would they?"

"I should say not," agreed Stockdale emphatically. He darted a vicious glance at Eccles. "No one but an idiot would even suggest doing such a thing."

Eccles, as he himself had already hinted, had not reached any nearer to a quarter-deck than the corner of 17th and G Streets, but the fine traditions of the American Navy stood him in good stead.

"Now you speak of it," he said, meanwhile surreptitiously mopping his damp hair with his handkerchief, "I think I saw something of the kind you mention myself. Only I did n't see but one man. He seemed to be performing a curious sort of antics. You remember I spoke to you about it, Stockdale?"

Stockdale hesitated the fraction of a second before he replied: "That 's so, you did; and I saw one man myself; silly looking ass he was, too, as far as I could make out."

"But we 're sure there were two men,"

exclaimed Captains White and Black together.

"Do you see any escaped Germans in this room?" queried Mixter.

"Oh, no! Major," Captain Black hastened to disclaim. "We didn't expect to find them in this room. We thought they might have got into the servants' quarters downstairs. We have found pro-Germans among servants occasionally."

"By Jove," exclaimed Major Wargrave in heartfelt tones, "that's right; rout the beggars out." He went on with his deal, but was heard to mutter disjointedly the words, "Damn Sein Feiners," "Rotters" and "Coercion of Ulster."

"Well, search the whole house," said Major Mixter. "Or, wait a minute, I'll have my butler up. He's been with me ten years, and I trust him absolutely. Ring the bell, will you, Billy?"

Lieut. Eccles crossed the room and pressed the electric button. He stood by the door until the butler appeared at the head of the stairs, and saluted that faithful serving man with such a series of winks, frowns and nods as caused the latter to enter the room with trembling trepidation.

"Kenny," said Major Mixter, "have you two naked men in the kitchen?"

The butler stared at his employer in amazement. Then a happy thought occurred to him, and his usual placid expression returned. Of course, it was natural enough that the heat of the last few days had been too much for the Major and had addled his brains temporarily.

"No, Major," he began soothingly. "No, Major, I have n't a naked man nor a naked wom—"

"That will do, Kenny," said Major Mixter sharply. "I 'm asking about two escaped German prisoners,—men," he added with emphasis.

The butler's perplexity returned in full flood. He stood speechless, his eyes roving about the room.

"Did you see anything unusual in the garden within the last hour?" demanded Captain White, in tones of stern cross-examination.

Kenny's roving eye happened to catch that of Stockdale, and was arrested in its course. An emphatic shake of the head on the part of the latter, accompanied by a wink, seemed to furnish him with a ray of light.

"Well, Sir," said the butler, who had been a fascinated spectator of the bathing scene from the vantage point of the dining-room window, "about half or three quarters of an hour ago I did seem to see something kind of white and glistening in the garden, but I took it to be only a shadder."

"But, are there any strangers downstairs?" demanded Major Mixter.

"No, Sir, not a stranger," responded Kenny promptly, and with obvious veracity, "not a stranger, man, woman, child, dog or cat."

"Will you look for yourselves?" asked the Major politely.

Captain White and Captain Black again consulted in an undertone. "Thank you, Major," said the latter, "we're quite satisfied those Germans aren't here."

"If they were in the garden," went on Mixter, "they probably escaped through the stables at the back."

"Of course, I don't want to put my oar in if it's not wanted," suggested Lieut. Eccles, whose spirits had begun to soar. "I should n't say a word if I had n't talked a lot with one of our naval intelligence officers who has given me some valuable

pointers about this sort of thing. Now I don't believe myself that two men without clothes would stay very long in the centre of Washington, even if they were Germans. From what this naval intelligence sharp has told me about escapes and all that, I reason these men would try to get out of town where they could perhaps borrow or steal some clothes." He paused and observed that Captain White and Captain Black were listening with profound attention. "My advice," he went on modestly, "such as it is and for what it is worth, is to look for them down on the docks by the river."

Captain White turned to Captain Black. "Not a bad idea, I think?"

"A very good one," assented Captain Black heartily.

"One moment," said Stockdale. "I don't wish to seem to belittle the Lieutenant's suggestion; it's a valuable one; the docks should be searched, certainly. But consider for an instant. Would n't two naked men wish to get out of town by the swiftest means of transportation? Very well. Try the docks by all means, but first look in the waiting-room of the Union Station."

"Very good," said Captain White.

"Very good," repeated Captain Black. "Major, thanks for your courtesy and assistance. Good-night."

"Ring the bell again, Bill," said Mixter after the front door was heard to shut. "That was a close shave for you two all right."

"You bet it was," admitted Eccles as he pushed the electric button once more. "You took it mighty well, Jack. We'd have been lost except for you."

"And Kenny," suggested Stockdale.

"And Kenny," agreed Eccles as the butler appeared in the doorway.

"Take this notice and tack it up on the door leading from the hall into the garden," said Major Mixter, as he handed over a leaf from the bridge score, on the reverse side of which he had been doing some printing.

"Very good, Sir," said the butler, taking the paper and turning towards the door. He glanced at the legend and read: "No sea-bathing in this garden."

"Very good, Sir," he repeated. He crossed the threshold and then turned back into the room once more. "What a difference war and summer weather in Washing-

ton had made in the relations of servants with their employers," thought Kenny. "Gentlemen were quite willing to talk, and treated servants really human like."

"I wonder," he ventured, "if they'll catch them two Germans."

"I don't think they will, Kenny," said Eccles. "You see, Mr. Stockdale and I felt sorry for them. Possibly we didn't give those intelligence service men quite as much of a clue as we might have done."

"I felt sorry for them too, Sir," said Kenny with a broad smile, which he distributed pretty equally between the Lieutenant and Stockdale.

"Quite right of you, Kenny," observed the latter. "Should we be utterly heartless just because we're at war? No, a thousand times No! Lieut. Eccles feels as I do, only perhaps more strongly so. He wants to give you something, Kenny, to show he appreciates that kind hearts are more than coronets."

"Match you for it," muttered Eccles to Stockdale. "Here, Kenny, I guess you've earned it." He fished in his pockets and handed over a ten dollar bill to the gratified butler.

Major Mixter was adding up the score of the final rubber. "Fourteen hundred points," he said. "Take away five hundred and fifty-two—"

"I say," interrupted Major Wargrave, "I know you fellows would n't do anything that was n't perfectly top-hole and all that, but you know in my country if we 'd had two escaped Germans about, every man Jack of us would have been out and after them."

"Eight hundred and forty-eight points," went on Mixter. "You don't really think there were any escaped Germans, do you, Wargrave?"

Eccles and Stockdale sat up with a jerk, as though a pin had suddenly been inserted in the anatomy of each.

"I did n't suppose anyone would really believe that. White and Black are two nice boys. They room together in the next block but one. They 're great friends of mine, and I try to give them a little diversion whenever I can,—dinner or theatre party, or something like that. You remember I was dummy when these two loons began doing living pictures in my garden, and that I went upstairs to telephone? Well, I fixed

it up with White and Black then. They did it very well, I thought."

"Villain," shouted Eccles, hurling the epithet and a sofa pillow at his host with utmost vehemence.

"Idiot," groaned Stockdale with evident reference to himself, as he fell limply back on the sofa.

"Oh, I see," said Major Wargrave. "Very clever, good sport, and all that sort of thing. Well, I must be toddlin'. Had a ripping evening!"

"Must you go?" asked Mixter. "Well, come soon again, old fellow. We'll have lots of bridge when it gets cooler. Good-night."

"Good-night, Major," echoed the others.

Major Wargrave went downstairs wearing a somewhat puzzled expression. At the front door, as the sound of laughter from the living-room floated over the banister and down the stairway, he paused to shake his head.

The thermometer had dropped to a hundred, and Major Wargrave was able to drag his weary steps to the Hotel Grafton and to walk the three flights of stairs to his room, for the elevator had stopped running. He

sat for some time trying to reconcile the events of the evening with the fact that the men with whom he had spent it were reputed to be among the most tireless and effective workers in America's great war machine. After consuming two cigarettes in the attempt, he decided the result sought would not be worth further effort.

He undressed and lay an aching head on his pillow.

"An awful climate," he murmured, "and a strange people."

The soothing whir of the electric fan by his bed made him drowsy. Soon he was asleep, and dreamed of a trim red brick Elizabethan house, with a broad expanse of velvet lawn in front, and green hedges, and roses full blooming in May.

ALL QUIET ALONG THE POTOMAC

ALL QUIET ALONG THE POTOMAC

I

THE Cosmopolitan Club at lunch presented, in animated form, an abbreviated version of "Who's Who in America" in war times. Alone by the window, on the H Street end of the large dining-room on the top floor, sat the Secretary of State, a pleasant-faced gentleman with white hair and mustache, whose appearance indicated a potentiality for diplomacy according to the most polite formulas. At a table on the side of the room, also sitting alone, was the builder of the Panama Canal. A big man in every way, with broad shoulders, rather heavy, large round face adorned with a small white mustache and surmounted by a head of scanty white hair, he looked the beau ideal figure of a soldier. Famous for the charm of his manners in private intercourse, it was jokingly reported that he displayed in his office the

same careful regard for the amenities that might have been expected of a grizzly bear. Nearby, a tall, slightly built man, with wavy iron-grey hair and the features of an artist or dreamer, seemed to need no change of costume or appearance to walk on the stage at a moment's notice in the part of one of the musicians in Warfield's "Music Master." It was the head of the almost all-powerful War Industries Board. A broad-shouldered young man, a mere boy in appearance with thick head of hair and virile features, leaned eagerly forward over the table as he discussed with his constant companion and Fidus Achates the possibility of a trip overseas in a destroyer. As Assistant Secretary of the Navy, multifold duties held him in Washington; but he meant to go or know the reason why. Entering the room in earnest conversation with three companions, a short man with somewhat tousled hair and smooth, youthful face, which just missed deserving the epithet "chubby," glanced around the room with sharp eyes, as though about to utter the warning, "Food will win the war; don't waste it." Generals with two stars and with one star were here and there, and Colonels,

Lieut. Colonels and Majors, especially the last, were everywhere. Arithmetic itself could not keep up with the Majors in Washington in the year 1918. A fair sprinkling of British and French officers there was too; a few Italians, and with them a single figure in a strange, dark brown uniform, a representative of the new Czecho-Slovak nation. The other seats in the overcrowded room were occupied by mere nobodies, tiny cogs in the war machine, but nevertheless human beings.

"Let's make a day of it in the country, Sunday," suggested Lieut. William Eccles, U. S. N., to Stockdale of the Camp Service Division, O. Q. M. G., who sat opposite him at the table for two. "It's rotten staying in town, and Chevy Chase is just as bad. Let's you and Mixter and I motor out along the Potomac, take our lunch with us, and spend the day with good old nature."

"Sort of a picnic?" queried Stockdale.

"Picnic is right," answered Eccles. "I will get Mixter to have lunch put up; we'll take my car, and go out beyond Cabin John and find a place where we won't see a soul, and where we can sag back and talk about golf, or baseball, or old college

days, or turkey trotting or anything except the war."

"Sounds all right," assented Stockdale.

"It's a date then. Mixter and I will pick you up here at ten-thirty, or say eleven o'clock so as to give the Sunday breakfast a chance."

"How about Phil Tresham?"

"Bring him, by all means. I like him. Old friend of yours, isn't he?"

"Lifelong," answered Stockdale. "'We twa hae played about the banks' and in lots of other places besides. His family has taken the war fairly seriously. Tresham has got three brothers with the A. E. F. I wish you could know the youngest one, Jim. He is a captain of a field battery, 26th Division. He is about the most attractive human being I have ever laid eyes on. He is awfully good-looking, lively, fond of a good time, but with a serious side to him too. He had just been admitted into partnership in one of the biggest and best firms in Boston when we got into the war. He had been married for about a year. Going was some sacrifice."

"It's wonderful the way that has been done all over the country. Tell Tresham

to come sure. Hello, Harry, how is rubber? Elastic enough to meet the demand, or are you still ruining the tire manufacturers?"

Mr. Bligh, of the rubber section of the War Industries Board, a short, smooth-faced individual wearing spectacles and a perennial smile of good humor, tapped the Lieutenant on the back before he answered, "Rubber is stretching, my boy; going to have plenty for the U. S. Army; but naval lieutenants stationed in Washington, who sport a private car, had better keep their mileage low. You won't be able to buy any more tires, Billy, if the war keeps on."

"Don't you worry about me," responded Eccles. "I'm fond of walking."

"That's the boy!" exclaimed Mr. Bligh heartily. "Keep those sea legs of yours in condition. You may be ordered to cross—on the Jersey City ferry—at any moment. Preparedness is what you want to keep in mind."

"How are you standing the weather, Bligh?" inquired Stockdale.

"Fine!" answered the rubber man. "Fine, what there is left of me to stand it. Sixteen pounds have slipped away since these little eyes first saw the day. July first

is the day I refer to. Last week during the hot spell I thought once or twice that they would have to remove me through a hose, but that danger passed over and now I am not afraid of anything. Good-bye boys. I would n't eat so much at this time of year if I were you."

"He is a cheerful soul, is n't he?" said Stockdale, as Mr. Bligh departed to exchange conversational scraps with the occupants of a table some distance away.

"Cheerful and a wonder," answered Eccles. "He is the sort of man who is keeping the home fires burning all right! He's Treasurer of the Goodfisk Rubber Company, one of the largest concerns in the country. It has heaps of government orders, and he was doing sure enough war work right in his own business. But they wanted him down here, and he came flying. Brought down eight or ten of his own office force; pays their wages out of the dollar a year he gets himself, and is controlling the rubber industry of the country with so much *sauviter in modo* and such efficiency that no one has a kick coming anywhere."

"He looks as though he liked it," observed Stockdale.

"Bligh likes any sort of hard work," answered Eccles, "and he loves this because it makes him feel he is helping to beat the Germans."

"And yet he will never get a bit of credit for it," said Stockdale.

"Credit is the last thing he is looking for; he doesn't want a ribband to stick in his coat. He has got a job he knows he can do, and is as happy as a lark. And work—I never saw anything like it! Last week I found I could get off on Friday night, so I thought I would run on to Boston and thence to Beverly to see the Missis and the kids. I couldn't get even an upper berth and was going to give it up when I happened to run into Bligh. He had a stateroom and insisted I should share it with him. Incidentally he wouldn't let me pay anything for it, but that isn't the point. I waited for him at the gate until I thought we had missed the train sure, when up dashed Bligh carrying a big portfolio of papers and followed by Bulkeley, his assistant, with another one. We all three swung aboard the train just as it began to move, and piled into the stateroom. It wasn't the hottest day—the thermometer

was only a hundred or so — but that stateroom was a cosy corner in Hades all right. With hardly a word, Bligh and Bulkeley stripped to their undershirts and then sat down to finish up the day's work. Bulkeley would hand Bligh a paper out of one of the portfolios, Bligh would read it, think a minute or two, gazing with an expression of wrapt beatitude at the roof of the car, and then give some instructions which Bulkeley would jot down. They kept at it tooth and nail; never let up for an instant. When we got to the Baltimore tunnel, of course there stopped being any air at all and I was choking and gasping for breath, like a codfish in the bottom of a dory, but those two worked on, all serene, and finished up the second portfolio just in time for Bulkeley to hop off the train as we were pulling out of Baltimore. He was going to take the next train back to Washington and keep things moving until Bligh's return on Monday morning. Really, it was quite a sight. Bligh sat there sweating freely; no, 'freely' is too small a word; he was running rivers; his eyes twinkling through his spectacles and grinning all the time as though he were listening to Al Jolson singing 'And Everything.'"

"He must be a good man," said Stockdale. He looked up. "There is Mixter now."

Eccles glanced towards the door where Major Mixter of the Signal Corps stood talking on apparently intimate terms with the white-haired old head-waiter. The latter's face was beaming with smiles, and he nodded his head repeatedly.

"I'll go and nail Jack for Sunday now," said Eccles. "No use in letting a good idea get cold."

II

About twenty miles out from Washington, Mixter, Eccles and Stockdale (Tresham having sent word at the last moment he could not come), had finished their picnic lunch under the boughs of a huge oak on the high bank overhanging the Maryland side of the Potomac. Beneath them the wide, muddy river flowed lazily along. Its thickly wooded shores stretched out as far as the eye could see. On the nearer side a canal-boat tied up to the shore gave the only sign of life. On its deck sat a man and a woman reading newspapers,

while two small children played about. The day was hot and still, but there seemed to be more air than in Washington; somehow it was easier to breathe.

"Peaceful," said Stockdale, stretching himself out on the grass beneath the oak and lighting a cigarette.

"Lord, yes," agreed Mixter, who sat with his back against the tree.

"Not a bad idea of little Willie's," observed Eccles. "If it wasn't for me you would both be reading all the Sunday papers at the Cosmopolitan Club."

"Or hearing Steve Gray explain why this had become another Twenty Years' War," said Stockdale.

"Or Bill McCoon point out that Pershing wouldn't have any troops fit to go into action until the spring of next year," suggested Mixter. "He doesn't consider what they did at Château-Thierry or in wiping out the Soissons-Rheims Salient going into action, because they were under the command of the French."

"He must be a military expert," observed Stockdale. "You can get up quite a reputation as a military expert if you belly-ache enough."

"Well, he's not here, thank the Lord," said Eccles with satisfaction. "The Sunday situation has been saved by the initiative of the American Navy."

The three seekers after nature smoked for some moments in silence. All were dressed in white flannel trousers, soft shirts, and outing coats. Stockdale was a civilian, and Mixter and Eccles gave a liberal interpretation to the orders of their respective services permitting officers to doff uniforms when engaged in physical exercise. Motoring out into the country and there lying flat on the back under a tree was felt by both to come properly under the head of exercise.

"I wonder," observed Stockdale lazily, "how many officers there are stationed in Washington?"

"Army or navy?" queried Eccles.

"Both."

"Oh, I don't know," answered Eccles, "five thousand; ten thousand; fifty thousand;—quite a lot anyway."

"It would seem so from your figures," agreed Stockdale. "They sound accurate and convincing."

"Mighty few privates," remarked Mixter.

"It doesn't bother me because I am a

civilian," said Stockdale, "but it bothers some people. I was walking down Seventeenth Street the other day, and just in front of me was a strapping big sergeant of infantry. He was saluting somebody at every step, arm going up and down like a pump handle. I caught up with him and he grabbed me by the shoulder. 'Blankety blank, blank, blank,' he remarked, 'this is a hell of a nice place for an enlisted man.'"

"It can't be helped," observed Eccles. "Officers must be saluted, even though in a place like Washington it's a nuisance all round. But I do sympathize with that sergeant. In a camp I suppose there are a hundred enlisted men, roughly, to every commissioned officer; here it is at least as much the other way round. So that sergeant, alone and single-handed, was doing the saluting for ten thousand men."

"Figures are evidently your strong point, Bill," observed Stockdale.

"It is a pity," said Mixter, "that those of us who are doing office work wear the same uniform as men who are out with troops. I wish it could be different, or distinguished in some way. They considered doing something of the kind, but never got along with it."

"You may be ordered anywhere," said Stockdale. "You don't know that you will stay anchored to Washington."

"I do," said Eccles. A somber look replaced his generally cheerful expression. "When I came up for a commission I could not pass the physical examination. They finally took me, but the Surgeon General's office wrote on the back of my physical report 'Waived for office work only.'"

"Cheer up, Bill," said Mixter, "you are no worse off than lots of others. I don't consider myself much of a soldier."

"There are a lot of us in the Quartermaster's Department," observed Stockdale, who have remained civilians though we probably could have commissions if we wanted them. I am afraid we don't because of selfish reasons. Sometimes I put it on the ground that it isn't right to be dressed as a soldier unless you are more closely connected with combat than by spending your days in handling business matters by means of a complicated system of correspondence; but I guess that isn't the real reason. The truth is, it would worry me sick to do office work under military orders. At present I can talk freely with Colonels, and even Gen-

erals, and stand up for what I think is right with a decent independence; besides, I really think civilians are less susceptible to that habit-forming germ known as 'passing the buck.' But there is something lacking just the same. By going into uniform you both have given up something, and as a result you've got a stronger sense of being in the Service. The great statesmen down at the far end of Pennsylvania Avenue can talk all they want about wearing spurs to keep your feet from slipping off the deck; if they were in uniform they might not take quite so jocular a view of the matter. Personally, I am too well settled as I am to make any change; but both of you are going to feel a satisfaction after the war that I won't enjoy."

"I should n't worry about that if I were you," observed Mixter. "There is a lot of energy used up in conscientious hair-splitting. I know lots of civilians in Washington who wish they were in uniform, and lots of men in uniform who think they could do better work as civilians. It does n't make any difference, as long as everybody gets on with his job."

"It's some job picking a job," said Stockdale. "I have never got over the whirl and confusion of my first three days' visit, before I came on for good. I had been told I was too old for a line commission, and I did n't see much good in anything else. I was wrong, of course, but that is the way I felt. Then they wrote and asked me to take the legal section in the Camp Service Division. It was a new thing, and when I looked it over I could n't tell what kind of a bird it might prove to be when hatched. As I was in Washington I thought I might as well look round a bit; so I started in calling at offices of men I happened to know. Honestly, everyone of them either offered me a job or knew of one waiting just round the corner. There was a place with the Shipping Board, a commission in the Intelligence Department, U. S. A., a job on the legal staff of the Oil Administrator, a chance to go to Roumania for the Food Commission, and I can't remember what else, but there were others. When I was n't talking jobs I was lunching at the Club or the Shoreham or the Willard, and seeing everyone I had ever heard of walking round as casual and common as the house fly:

Tumulty, Daniels, Lane, Baker and lots of others whom I had regarded more or less as fabulous monsters. The crowds on the street cars and the mobs pouring out of government offices in the afternoon made my eyes bulge out, and I got so much inside dope on the aircraft situation that my hair stood on end. I guess everybody's hair did that when they talked aircraft. Taking the third degree, as a preliminary to getting into a government office-building, the process being accompanied by personally hostile glances from suspicious men in blue coats and brass buttons, made me so nervous that I felt the imminence of arrest and incarceration hovering over me night and day. Before leaving home I had telegraphed to the Willard for a room. When I got here, of course there was nothing doing. I tried eight other hotels, all I could locate, and each one of them gave me as cordial a welcome as though I was the Scarlet Fever. Finally, Phil Tresham agreed to let me sleep on the couch in his sitting room. By the time that haven of refuge appeared on my horizon my power of independent volition had evaporated, and my morale would have disgraced Austria. I could n't sleep

at night, and my head swam, until I got home and had a breathing spell."

"It's fierce until you get used to it," said Eccles. "Why did you choose the Camp Service job?"

"I got so confused by the multiplicity of ways in which I could win the war that the only safe course seemed to be grabbing the job which had taken the trouble to look me up. I don't know whether I am accomplishing anything or not. Half the time I think I might as well be at home; better, in fact."

"The truth of the matter," observed Mixter, "is that most of the work in Washington is not only uncongenial, but doesn't give any solid satisfaction or sense of accomplishment. Nothing does that in war times but fighting, I imagine. We are here because we would be so miserable at home that we couldn't stand it; but I am under no delusions as to being a patriot. If I am doing any good it is so much clear gain."

"After all," said Stockdale, "it is a big privilege to be where you can see a miracle take place before your very eyes."

"You mean the way the country is backing up the war?" asked Mixter.

"That and the scale on which things are being done. I have always pictured myself as an optimist, but in my most soaring moments I never supposed the U. S. could get going the way it actually has done. Not a day goes by that I don't wonder at the vision of the men who are running things. Their conception of what they have got to do is so big that I feel as though my mind was born shrivelled."

"As though you were a sort of pin-head," suggested Eccles helpfully.

"Less than that," answered Stockdale. "I remember so well the way things were done in the Spanish War. At that time I was helping to defend the North Shore of Massachusetts from possible excesses on the part of the Spanish fleet, with some muzzle-loading artillery, — Civil War relics. Slip-shod, is the way to describe things then. Not only that, but the point of view was small — picayune. Now, nothing is too big, too expensive, or too much work for us to tackle. If we need ordnance, we buy land, build a brand-new plant of enormous extent, put up houses for the workmen to live in, take over the whole output of a copper mine, and go at it from the ground up; the

same with ships; with aeroplanes; with everything. American initiative, American enterprise, and the American way of handling big problems is showing up as handsomely as the heroine in a movie. I see that the optimism on which I used to pride myself is a pretty poor, weak sort of thing. Its foundations lay in taking for granted that everything would somehow turn out all right, no matter what was done. The real thing in American optimism consists in the belief that while what seems impossible is staring you in the face, it can be done as easily as blowing on your hands."

"You have touched on one striking feature of what you describe not inaccurately as a miracle," observed Mixter, "but there is another. That is the universal willingness of people. There has never been anything like it. I am a business man; if I know anything it is the business man's point of view; the way he looks on things, and his attitude toward affairs generally, particularly toward government interference. It is the one thing he hates and dreads. Yet, what is happening today? The War Industries Board, the War Trade Board,

the Food Administration, all the regular Departments, and Lord knows what else, are butting in on the most minute operations of every business in the country. Any kicks? A few now and then; but by and large every business man in the country is falling over himself in his eagerness to do as he is asked. He wants to get into the game somehow, and if cutting down his output one half is the only way he can do it, that seems to him better than nothing. There are a few profiteers hovering around like buzzards, but they are not a drop in the bucket."

"Hello, there comes a steamboat," said Eccles, sitting up. "I didn't know anything ran on the old Potomac now-days."

Round the bend in the river ahead came a lumbering old-fashioned, paddle-wheel steamboat, crowded with day excursionists.

"They have got the right idea of the way to spend Sunday, too," said Eccles.

"They need it," observed Stockdale. "I have wondered how some of these stenographers and clerks get through this weather. All day in offices like the stokehole of a battleship, and nights in suffocating hall bedrooms."

"You don't hear any complaints," remarked Eccles.

"Not one," agreed Mixter. "They want to be in the game, too."

Stockdale lay back again on the grass, his arm under his head, and looked at his companions with a somewhat quizzical smile. "Has the war, by any possible chance, suggested to either of you that people generally are better than you had any idea of; a damn sight better than you are yourselves, for instance?"

"Surest thing you know," admitted Mixter.

"Lord, yes," assented Eccles heartily. "I have to struggle frequently against tagging myself 'Market value thirty cents.'"

Stockdale laughed. "It certainly does make you realize your own weaknesses as though someone had put a fifty-candle power incandescent electric light inside you. My spirit, I think, is fairly willing, but good Lord, the flesh is weak. It is one thing to have the correct and patriotic mental attitude; to hand over the goods is another pair of shoes. I am learning that it isn't what you are willing to do now that determines your effectiveness, so much as what you have

been doing for the last twenty years or so. My continued and reasonably successful endeavor hitherto to pick the primrose path in life is pretty nearly tying my hands behind my back now."

"You do feel at times as though your soul was bared stark and naked, and blown upon by somewhat bitter winds," observed Mixter.

"Look here," protested Eccles indignantly, "I called this meeting as a pleasure party, and I'll be hanged if I listen to any more loose talk about souls or psychology. What you need is to have your liver shaken up, Stockdale, and to get your blood circulating. As for Jack, exercise won't help him. He is just naturally a born drooler, and would sit contentedly talking philosophy to a wooden Indian all day. Honestly, aren't you both glad to be in Washington at this period in the world's history?"

Mixter and Stockdale nodded. "It's the most interesting time of my life," conceded the latter. "What difference does it make what any single individual is doing? Think of what is being done by everyone together."

"Never again," observed Mixter, "will

anyone catch me cursing out the inefficiency of a democracy. In the first place, inefficiency is a small price to pay for individual freedom; in the second place, this country is showing that you don't have to pay it."

"You are right," agreed Stockdale, "on both your points. Until we thought we might lose it, I don't believe any of us quite realized what we owed to democracy. As I understand it, democracy means the right of the individual to develop through individual effort and initiative, instead of doing so by means of orders from governmental authorities. It represents the directly opposite theory of civilization from that of the Germans; as different as black is from white. It is a good suggestion that this war is being fought to make the world safe for—"

"Don't spring that one about the Democratic Party," warned Eccles. "My good nature is about exhausted as it is."

"Germany's system is merely government by suffocation," went on Stockdale.

"Down at Seventeenth and G Streets, where the stormy winds do blow," observed Eccles, "I am too busy putting the American Navy on its feet to spend much time in

considering the whichness of the why; so you two will have to excuse me if I am not able to keep step with you in a hot-air contest; still, little Willie does have a thought now and then. I am no Bolshevik, but I do feel more interested in people than I used to do. I have been discovering for some months that there are several good men in the world outside the list of my previous acquaintances. There are a lot of men here who have given up real things just for a chance to help beat the Germans. Sacrifice to them means more than resigning from a club or two because their income is reduced. When it comes to sacrifice, they eat it up. A good many of them, I find, have got sons in the army."

"The son of the head-waiter at the club," remarked Mixter, "has just been awarded the D.S.O. I was talking with him about it the other day."

"You said something, Bill," observed Stockdale. "Some of the people I have met here have certainly broadened my views and taught me a little about what unselfishness means."

"You will learn something in time, if you live long enough, Bob," said Eccles.

"Boston is the hub of the universe, of course, but there are some decent folks living out on the spokes and the rim."

"Look who's here!" observed Mixter suddenly, staring down the lane which ran to the highway. "Who told you where to find us?"

Philip Tresham strolled up toward the little group, exchanging greetings as he did so. He selected a comfortable place to sit, where he could lean his back against a rock, and gave a glance at the wooded banks on the opposite side of the river before replying to Mixter's question.

"I had to spend the morning at the office with General Gish. We are getting out some new regulations. When we got through I thought I would take a chance and follow you."

He leaned back, a trifle wearily, and stretched out his legs at their full length before him. "My word, but this is nice here," he said slowly. "Is this what you have been doing all day?"

Eccles raised his head a moment from the turf where he was lying. "Since our *al fresco* nooday repast, what you see is precisely all that we may be truthfully said to

have been doing. I can't, with any regard to my conscience, designate the conversation that has been carried on here as doing anything."

"What's the matter, Phil? Are you tired out?" asked Stockdale, who had been studying the somber expression of his friend's face since the latter's arrival.

"Not a particle," answered Tresham, with an obvious attempt at cheerfulness. "Go ahead with the talk; I'm a good listener."

"It is all over," said Mixter. "We have got everything properly settled. You will have to dish up some new problem for us. We can't think of any more."

Tresham sighed, and closed his eyes. "Bully here," he murmured.

"Spit it out, Phil," demanded Stockdale. "What's the trouble? You've got something on your mind."

"Oh, it's nothing much; nothing unusual, that is. I admit that I get the jim-jams once in a while, when news from France sort of brings things home. I got a letter from my youngest brother, Jim, this morning. He is in a hospital; been badly gassed, and got a piece of shrapnel in his right arm. How-

ever, he is coming on all right I guess, from what he says. Does n't think there is much chance he will have to lose the arm, is the way he puts it. Finds it very restful in the hospital, but would like to get back to the front. Says it makes him feel like a slacker loafing in a hospital when other men are out at work."

There was complete silence for a minute after Tresham had ceased speaking.

"We have been talking about our *war* work," said Mixter finally, in low tones, and with considerable emphasis on the word war. "Good Lord!"

Stockdale and Eccles gazed into the distance with set expressions.

"War work here in Washington!" exclaimed Eccles at last.

"And all hell loose in Europe!" added Stockdale.

Tresham shook himself free from the spell which had seemed to lie on him since his arrival. His gaze travelled down the broad river. "Never mind," he said, "take things as they are. It's all quiet along the Potomac."

MUNITIONS OF WAR

MUNITIONS OF WAR

"YOU must not say 'masks,'" shouted Jim Kellen into the transmitter of the long distance telephone.

"Why not?" came back a faint voice over the wire.

"Because those are the orders," continued Kellen. "You can talk all you want to about 'gas,' but if you hitch the word 'masks' on,—good-night, the country is ruined. Put it this way: 'to save our men from German poison gas.' Do you understand?"

There was no answer.

"Confound it all," exclaimed Kellen, "they've cut us off again." He hung up the receiver, waited possibly five seconds, and then jounced it up and down on its hook with a persistency born of hot-weather irritation. "Hello," he shouted. "You cut me off—with De Sota. Yes, De Sota; Market 2921. Mr. Merrill; M-E-R-R-I-L-L. At the Red Cross. Well, hurry up now; it's important."

He slammed the receiver back again on the hook and turned to Major Johnson of the Gas and Flame Division, Chemical Warfare Service, U. S. A. "Merrill has got a thousand six-sheet posters printed asking for materials for gas masks," he explained. "It's an awful break, because the War Council of the Red Cross has ruled against it. You see, we are a noncombatant organization, and are not supposed to furnish materials for offensive warfare; or any kind of warfare, I guess. I only learned this recently myself. Merrill is the local conservation man out there, and he is as full of pep as an Irish terrier; too full. He will have the Red Cross pinched by an International Police Force the first thing you know, for knocking the slats out of the Geneva Convention. However, he has my sympathy. Hamlet's little problem about 'to be or not to be' did n't have a thing on my job. I have to consider how to do and not to do."

Major Johnson, a smooth-faced man of thirty-five or so, wearing spectacles and with dark brown hair brushed all the way across his head from a part on the extreme left side, smiled tolerantly.

"How is that?" he inquired.

"Well, of course you know that everyone in Washington is winning the war in one way or another. Some of the ways are darn good, and others, if you ask me, are punk. The special way in which I personally am winning the war consists in the collection of much-needed materials which, for one reason or another, you can't go into a shop and buy. In other words, I have to dig them out here, there and everywhere. Over here at the Red Cross we call it Conservation or Salvage or Reclamation, just as the fancy takes us. It all depends on which you consider the 'more tenderer word,' as old Mr. Weller remarked in reference to Sam's 'walentine.' But step across the street to the War Industries Board and you will find you have to mind your p's and q's. They have got the meaning of those words down finer than an unabridged dictionary. If the conservation man there steps into salvage territory, or the salvage man attempts to do any conservation, it's looked upon about as kindly as an assassination. In fact, there's a pretty how-de-do. I get my orders from the War Industries Board, and I have to watch my step, I tell you.

However, I have learned to tell salvage from conservation a mile off, by the smell I think, and things are running very smoothly. I am quite puffed up about it. The War Industries Board notifies us that they need something they can't buy in the open market; tin, for example. I send out a hurry call to Red Cross Chapters all over the country, and presently about twenty million people are nosing out tinfoil, pewter articles and collapsible tubes, like so many foxhounds on a hot scent. We've got a great organization of willing workers. All that is necessary is to press a button in Washington, and the Red Cross members do the rest."

"They do the rest, and you do the resting?" suggested Major Johnson.

"Words to that effect," resumed Kellen, "hackneyed though they are, have sometimes crossed my own mind. However, someone has got to press the button, and it's just the form of exercise that I like."

The telephone on Kellen's desk gave out a prolonged and guttural buzz, and he raised the receiver to his ear.

"Hello! Yes, I am ready for De Sota. Go ahead. Hello! That you, Merrill?

They cut us off. Did you hear what I said last? Make all your appeals read 'to save our men from German poison gas,' and don't use the word 'masks' on your life."

Kellen listened for a few moments in silence. Then he put his hand over the transmitter, and turned to Johnson with a grin on his face.

"Merrill is making the wires positively crinkle," he remarked. "Oh, oh, oh, such language! And over the telephone, too!"

He raised the telephone to his lips. "Now, look here, Merrill, I am obeying orders, and so must you. How can they save men from German poison gas without using masks? Search me. But that has got nothing to do with it. We have got to do as we're told. If the secret leaks out through others, that isn't our fault. I've got a hunch that some clever person will guess what we are after. However, destroy those posters and get out new ones. That's a good fellow. You are doing great work. Be happy, now. Good-bye. I am sending you a long letter."

Kellen put the telephone back on his desk and swung round in his chair again towards Major Johnson.

"Of course, I know as well as you do that men, women and children will talk plain English, and say they are collecting stuff for gas masks; but officially the Red Cross is merely turning over certain materials to the army which the army is going to use in some way to protect our men from poison gas. Do you get me?"

"Sure," answered Major Johnson, "but don't let that worry you. You set up your machinery for making the collections, and forget about the rest of it. Don't you bother with publicity. There is a little bird not far from here which I rather think will begin twittering before long. I have just spent a couple of hours with the publicity man of the Food Administration."

"Bully for you," exclaimed Kellen with a relieved look.

"You will get all the publicity you want; don't worry about that," repeated Major Johnson. "For instance, look at this little card I've had printed. It can be distributed by the thousands. How does it strike you?"

Kellen studied for some minutes the card which Johnson handed him. It read like this:

"To Save a Soldier's Life
Turn over to the Red Cross
Peach-stones Prune-pits
Apricot-pits Walnuts
Plum-pits Butternuts
Hazel-nuts
and the shells of those nuts."

"It's all right," said Kellen; "that is, if you believe it."

"Believe it?" repeated Major Johnson.

Kellen shook his head. He was a tall, thin, smooth-faced man, with red hair, and a humorous cast of countenance. In private life he was a bank president in a smaller city of the Middle West, and troubles and annoyances rolled off him like water off a duck's back.

"Yes, believe it," he said. In spite of Gen. Morewood's letter, I can't help feeling you fellows are putting something over on me. Peach-stones to save a soldier's life! Can you beat it?"

"Modern warfare has many ramifications," opined Johnson wisely.

"You said something," agreed Kellen, "but to think you've got to fight with peach-stones and prune-pits does make you sit up. How do you put them into gas masks anyway?"

"You burn them, and make a sort of carbon; just the way you make charcoal from wood," answered Johnson. "Then the carbon goes into the respirator of the mask, and the gas passes through the carbon, and the poison is killed or purified or rendered harmless. Understand?"

"Certainly; it's as clear as mud. And it's all right, I suppose," said Kellen. "Anyhow, I've got the whole thing worked out already. We will be shipping you carload lots before you know it. America expects every peach-stone to do its duty, and it's my job to see they do it."

"That's the talk!" said Major Johnson. "Peach-stones will win the war, my boy! By the way, though, you must tell your people to extract the meat from all edible nuts before they ship them."

"Why so? Can't you use the whole nut?"

"Perfectly well; but I had to promise the Food Administration that we would do that, so no food values would be wasted."

"Now, look here, Johnson," exclaimed Kellen, "I have to collect platinum by saying the government both wants it and doesn't want it; I have to go on tiptoe so the War Industries Board won't throw

fits all over the place, and I have to do a lot of other things I don't like; but I'll be darned if I ask Red Cross members to sit on their haunches picking out food values from nuts with a pin. I draw the line somewhere, and this is the place. You tell Mr. Herbert Hoover that he is going to have a meatless day on these nuts, or else forget it."

"I think the latter is the simpler course," said Johnson. "Come on, I'll take you out to lunch."

The two walked down the marble steps of Red Cross National Headquarters, and started up 17th Street. In the park opposite, the band of the Engineer Regiment stationed at Camp Meigs was playing "Over There." Hundreds of clerks were sitting on the grass listening to the music; officers were pouring out from the side doors of the State, War and Navy Building in a hurry for lunch. Seventeenth Street was crowded.

"Who is that?" asked Major Johnson as Kellen nodded to a tall, light-haired man dressed in grey flannels and wearing a rather wide-brimmed straw hat.

"It's Bob Stockdale," answered Kellen.

"He's a civilian in the Quartermaster's Department, Camp Service Division."

"Good-looking," said Johnson.

"Good fellow," answered Kellen. "Popular. Everybody likes him. Perhaps there is just a little too much Bawston about him. I think he looks on a wooly westerner like me as a new sort of species. However, he's all right; everybody says he is one of the best."

"Camp Service Division, you said? By Jove, I must get the army and navy started on this campaign of ours. I ought to have done it before now."

"Before now, is right. Do you mean to tell me you've been letting our soldiers and sailors go on swallowing their peach-stones all this time?"

"It shall be stopped at once; this afternoon," answered Major Johnson. "Let's go in here. It is as good a place to eat as any, and we can sit outdoors."

The two walked up the little flight of stone steps leading into a house directly opposite the State, War and Navy Building on Seventeenth Street, and passed through the house out into the small garden. There were a score or more of large and small tables ranged about, nearly all occupied,

and it was with some difficulty that Kellen and the Major found seats by themselves at a table at the end of the garden furthest away from the street. There were a few women present, but most of the tables were occupied by officers: Signal Corps, Quartermaster's Department, General Staff, Adjutant Generals' Department; all were represented in the groups of cheerful citizen soldiers who chattered and laughed in the warm September sunshine. At a long table near them, Kellen and Johnson could hear eight Majors from the office of the Judge Advocate General discussing legal technicalities and courts martial with all the wrapt animation which laymen reserve for poetry, art or affairs of the heart.

"I say," observed Kellen suddenly, rousing himself from what Mr. Weller senior was wont to call a "referee," into which he had fallen while Major Johnson was delivering the luncheon order to the extremely good-looking waitress who attended them, "I must get the women wound up on this campaign. It needs peaches to collect peach-stones properly."

"Or to do 'most anything else," amended Major Johnson.

"You never said a truer word," agreed Kellen. "As far as the Red Cross is concerned, the women are the whole thing. It is their devotion that makes the Red Cross. It's their organization, really. Red Cross men, like myself, are nothing but go-betweens; useful, perhaps,—like knitting-needles,—but not objects deserving great veneration. However, that's neither here nor there. I must select some principal peach to enthuse her sister-peaches throughout the country in this campaign." Kellen poured himself a large cup of breakfast coffee. "You don't object to my breezy, western way of discussing the matter, do you?" he asked with feigned anxiety.

"I was born in Indiana, in George Ade's home town," answered Major Johnson.

"By Jove, if I could get her!" exclaimed Kellen as he stared at a table at the further end of the garden.

Major Johnson followed his glance, and discerned, sitting facing them and between two young girls clad in the uniform of the Red Cross Motor Corps, a strikingly beautiful young woman with hair which at this distance appeared to be of the color of daffodils, blue eyes, and a face which gave

every appearance of high breeding, but which wore at the moment a rather discontented expression.

"I 'll ask her now," said Kellen, jumping up. "Be back in a moment."

Major Johnson kept his eyes glued on the group at the distant table, in order to observe the progress of the negotiation. He saw Kellen shake hands, and observed with what energy he urged his request upon the beautiful young woman with the wonderful hair. She appeared to be taking a polite interest in the discourse, and after a few moments smiled, and at length laughed heartily. Then she began to talk, apparently with great rapidity, and finally rose from the table and started to go into the house, first shaking hands again with Kellen. As she did so she shook her head, although smiling pleasantly at the moment.

"No use," observed Kellen, as he plumped down in his chair opposite Johnson. "The beautiful Miss Lovering was in a petulant mood, and all my eloquence could n't move her. She is supposed to be resting here, after six months canteen service in the war zone. As a matter of fact, she has been doing more Red Cross work over here than

any other woman in Washington. I never knew her to turn down a call for help before."

"I thought she looked a little cross," suggested Major Johnson.

"I don't know that I blame her, really," answered Kellen. "She says she applied yesterday to go back to the canteen service in France. Request refused because there is a new rule that women with near relatives there aren't to be allowed in the war zone; and she's got two brothers who are officers in the 77th Division. So they won't give her a passport. She's as much pleased about it as General Wood likes being kept in Kansas. Peach-stones just now look very small to her."

"A pretty, petulant prima donna,—what?" observed Major Johnson.

"Perhaps so," assented Kellen, "but at any rate, a perfect peach, and a record-beating worker; and that's what is needed in this business. I didn't tell her so, but I am going to wait and ask her again."

"Well," said Johnson, rising from the table, "let's be moving. I am going down to the office of the Camp Service Division O. Q. M. G. and put in an hour or two there;

with your friend Stockdale, I suppose. Next week I want you to come on to New York and help boom things there. Now we have started, we want to get this thing going like a prairie fire. So long, for the present."

II

Bob Stockdale walked up Fifth Avenue in the bright, early autumn sunshine, with buoyant step and a general feeling of elation. He had been ordered to New York for three days in connection with an investigation of the Camp Service Depot there. A little change after the hot summer in Washington was very welcome, and a job which was only remotely connected with law never failed to give him a sense of exhilaration. He drew a deep breath of satisfaction as his gaze travelled along the most wonderful city street in the world. New York assuredly looked good to Stockdale; but in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, richer or poorer, it had never failed to do that. There used to be an old saying, which became sadly overworked, that good Americans when they die go to Paris. As

the accuracy of this statement was never proven, it must be taken as an expression of hope deferred rather than as an official *communiqué.* Nobody, however, has ever been heard to question the adage that good Bostonians when they wish to enjoy life go to New York. The descendants of the Puritans seem to lose something of the sharp edge of Calvinistic conscience which protrudes from all of them, and to present a smooth and rounded surface to the world after temporary immersion in the swift eddying currents of the metropolitan whirlpool. In New York Stockdale became a light-hearted buccaneer in feelings and aspirations. Fifth Avenue, he thought, had never looked so wonderful as now in war times. Other cities displayed flags, but on Fifth Avenue flags seemed to blossom forth from the buildings on both sides of the street like flowers in the garden,—French, British, Italian, and "flags with their crimson bars." Never was seen such a profusion of color as greeted Stockdale's eyes when, nearing Fortieth Street, he paused and looked up and down the crowded avenue.

"Are you star gazing, Mr. Stockdale?" he heard a clear voice saying, and turning

he beheld Miss Katherine Lovering looking very trig and smart in her dark blue tailor-made walking dress and small black velvet hat beneath which appeared a profusion of wonderful daffodil-colored hair.

"It only needed this!" exclaimed Stockdale, shaking the small gloved hand extended to him. "By Jove, what luck to meet you here. Don't say that you are busy, or have an engagement, or something of that sort, but walk as far as the Park this glorious afternoon."

Miss Lovering paused a moment to consider before she replied, "Very well. It doesn't do to be busy always, does it?"

"I should say not," replied Stockdale fervently. "They are getting some figures ready for me down at the Camp Service Depot, and I am off duty until evening. Life looks as cheerful as a rainbow just at present."

"New York is fun," conceded Miss Lovering.

"But you live here," said Stockdale, as though that made all the difference.

"I haven't really lived here for more than a year. I am only here for three days

for shopping now. But I know what you mean. To appreciate New York at its full value, one must have been living in a desert."

"Are you referring to Boston, by any chance?" queried Stockdale, with a slightly aggrieved manner.

"How can you think me so sacrilegious!" laughed Miss Lovering. "I am afraid F Street, the scene of shopping expeditions in Washington, was in my mind at the moment."

"Hullo!" exclaimed Stockdale suddenly, "what is doing in front of the library? Wild West Show?"

Miss Lovering followed his gaze with interest. "Let's cross over and see," she suggested.

Apparently there was very much doing in front of the library, at both ends and in the middle. At the Fortieth Street corner the two found themselves part of a group of two score or more individuals who were listening attentively to the fervent harangue of a newsboy perched upon the balustrade of the library near the sidewalk, which he was using as a rostrum. The youthful orator appeared to be about twelve years

old, his toes were visibly bursting through his worn-out shoes, his knickerbockers consisted mostly of patches, his wrists protruded a long way beyond the sleeves of the too-tight jacket, but he tossed his head, and waved his arms with all the fire of Demosthenes.

"I tell yuh," he shouted, "we're fightin' to down otockrasy, and we all got to get in it, me and youse and everybuddy. This is a free country we live in, ain't it? Don't youse want to keep it so! Do youse want a bunch of measly Germans coming round here and giving orders? No, Sir. No otockrasy for me! I got two brothers over there; one in the Marines, and one of 'em with the 77th Division. That's our own Division, New York, from Camp Upton. I bet my brothers give them Germans sumptin' to think about. You prob'ly got brothers or sumptin' over there too. But we ain't there, me and youse. So wot have we gotta do to git into this fight against otockrasy? We gotta back 'em up, ain't we? If we ain't fightin' we gotta do sumptin'; ain't that right? Me and youse knows that. Think of those fellers gettin' all blowed to bits over there. Gee! I don't

like to think about it, but I'd like to kill a few of them Germans. But I'm trying to do sumptin'; an' you can do sumptin'. Buy War Savings Stamps! I gottem fer sale right here. Cum up now and put up. If you want to knock otockrasy buy a War Savings Stamp!"

"I'll take one," said Stockdale, advancing to the balustrade.

"That's good!" said the orator. "Much obliged, Sir! Here's your change. Keep it fer meself? No, thank you; I could n't do that, Sir. Giv it to de Red Cross. Now come on. Somebuddy else want to giv otockrasy a knock? Step lively."

"Something doing in New York every minute," said Stockdale, as he rejoined Miss Lovering and the two moved slowly along the crowded sidewalk.

"Look at the elephants!" exclaimed Miss Lovering, staring ahead. "Elephants halfway up the library steps! I wonder if they are in the fight against 'otockrasy' too?"

"By Jove," said Stockdale, following her glance. "This appears to be the peachstone campaign. We want to see this."

There was a great crowd in front of the library, filling the sidewalk to the curb,

and all the steps. On the broad landing before the last flight were half a dozen elephants lent for the occasion by the New York Hippodrome under the charge of two keepers. Each elephant was gloriously caparisoned with a crimson cloth covering most of its huge body, and bearing the words in white letters "Save your Peach-stones."

At the top of the last flight of steps stood Jim Kellen, the loose ends of his necktie flowing negligently in the breeze, his hat off, and his hair ruffled. He also was addressing the multitude.

Ranged across the landing, where the elephants were standing, were a great number of cast-iron barrels, each one bearing the legend "Throw your peach-stones here and save a soldier's life"; and every barrel was full.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Kellen was saying, "among the horrible methods of warfare utilized by the baby-killers of Germany, there is none worse than poison gas of one sort or another. It is by this means that many of our men have been made to suffer a frightful death. There is more danger in a gas attack than in a hail of shrapnel, or even of high explosive shells.

I am told that there is no worse agony than being gassed. But we are going to beat the villains at their own game. We shall be able shortly to give them gas compared to which their own will be like a waft of mountain air. Meanwhile we must protect our men from German poison gas, and to do that we must have peach-stones, fruit-pits and nut-shells. They make the carbon that saves men's lives. Here's a work that everybody can do."

"Look at that rogue elephant!" exclaimed Stockdale, suddenly pointing to one of the thick-skinned quadrupeds which wore, in addition to his crimson back covering, white pantelettes and a monster white foolscap. "Just keep your eye on him. He is eating up those peach-stones by the barrel! Do you mind waiting for me a moment?"

He wedged his way through the crowd until he reached the open space, and called loudly, "Mr. Kellen!"

Jim Kellen stopped orating, and searching his audience discerned Stockdale.

"Ah, Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" he remarked.

"I have discovered something anyway,"

called back Stockdale. "Do you know that there is a frightful loss of peach-stones taking place in this vicinity?"

"How so, Mr. Stockdale?" queried Kellen.

"Cast your eye on that pachyderm in pantelettes!" shouted Stockdale.

The attention of the crowd was at once diverted, and roars of laughter succeeded the attentive silence which had prevailed. The clown elephant was swinging his trunk with methodical precision in and out of the nearest barrel, the while his eyes wore an expression of calm contentment.

"Great Scott!" roared Kellen. "Here, you keeper, back that rascal up a bit. Ladies and gentlemen, the elephants will now go round, and the band begin to play. After that we will listen to a few remarks from Mr. Robert Stockdale of the Quartermaster's Department."

The keepers from the Hippodrome proceeded to put their charges through a variety of pleasing manœuvres, terminated by the formation of a mighty pyramid in which all the elephants stood gracefully on their hind legs, while the band from the Hippodrome, seated in a sight-seeing auto-bus,

rendered with praiseworthy zest, "Where do we go from here?"

"Now, Stockdale," shouted Kellen, as the performance ceased. Stockdale picked his course through the elephants with considerable circumspection, and mounted to the top step by Kellen's side.

"Mr. Kellen and ladies and gentlemen," he began. "There is a good deal of speaking going on in this vicinity, and I shall add to the turmoil only for a few minutes. I do not feel myself competent to compete either with the youthful Daniel Webster on my right, or with the lady in the Motor Corps uniform whom I can hear, even at this distance, extolling the virtues of Liberty Bonds at the 42nd Street corner. Let me say at the outset that I have known something of this campaign, and I desire to compliment Mr. Kellen of the Red Cross on the way in which he has handled it. He has got everybody to working, and has kept them all in good humor. In fact, ladies and gentlemen,—and I trust Mr. Kellen will excuse the warmth of my remarks, which come from a full heart,—his conduct reminds me of a recently elected Mayor in my own state who declared in his inaugural address

that he should forget every consideration but duty, and go forward in the public interests swerving neither to partiality on the one hand, nor to impartiality on the other, and that it was the ambition of his life to be like Cæsar's wife,—all things to all men! I want to tell you a story which I heard the other day, and which seems to me the pleasantest of any that I have heard about the war. I can't vouch for its truth because I only heard it casually; but it is so cheery that I hope it is true. There is n't one of us here who has n't thrilled with pride at the achievement of the lost battalion in the Argonne Forest. You remember the men were entirely cut off for ten days with no food but their iron rations, and no way in which help or reinforcements could be brought to them. In fact, they were completely surrounded by the Germans. But they held out, and when on the tenth day the enemy demanded their surrender, the commander of this little band of heroes, Major Charles Whittlesey, replied in language of unmistakable clearness, 'Go to Hell!' The lost battalion, as you know, was finally rescued. Thank God for it. I am told that when Major Whittlesey's

parents heard of their son's glorious conduct their hearts swelled with pride and joy, but that all they said was this:

"'Well,' remarked Mr. Whittlesey to his wife, 'Charlie is a hero and I am prouder of him than I can say. But I don't know that his language will do us much good in church circles.'"

"'Oh, well,' answered the mother, 'we must make allowances. You know Charlie always did get irritable when he didn't have his meals on time.'"

"In spite of the fact that we hear these tales of valor almost every day, it is difficult, ladies and gentlemen, on this beautiful afternoon, and in this place, to realize the horror and cruelty and bloodshed that is going on three thousand miles away. But, though we cannot realize the actual events with a seeing eye, our thoughts, our emotions, every instinct of our beings, are with our men overseas. Mr. Kellen has told you something about a gas attack. Let me say a word as to what this so-called peach-stone campaign really means. I had the facts from an officer of the Gas and Flame Division of the army, familiar with the subject. At a certain place in France part

of a sector was being held by a regiment of our own men and a regiment of French soldiers. The gas masks of the Americans were supplied with carbon made from the materials which you are asked to collect. The gas masks of the French troops were supplied with carbon made from certain wood fibres, because cocoanut shells, the best material, were not obtainable, and this peach-stone campaign had not progressed so far that we could furnish any carbon to our Allies. The Germans, who were about to advance, began with one of their fiendish gas attacks. There was plenty of warning, and both the French and our men had time to put their masks on. What was the result? It was a new form of gas, something a little more horrible than anything which had been used before. The gas masks of the French were found to be of almost no protection, and troops as gallant as any in the world were forced to retreat. The carbon made from peach-stones and these other materials, on the other hand, worked with almost complete efficiency. Our men were able to stand their ground, and when the Hun hordes came over the top they found not a deserted field, as they expected, but

some thousands of American doughboys who met them with such a hail of machine-gun fire that the Germans who were not killed, turned tail after a brief interval and ran back in terror to their holes for safety.

"And so, ladies and gentlemen, when you add to these materials imperatively required by the Gas and Flame Division of the army, you are not only helping to save the lives of our men overseas, but you are actively taking part in winning the war. It is the whole mighty volume of endeavor which counts, and anyone who disdains to help because the form of service is small or, in his opinion, not commensurate with his abilities or ambitions, is one who has failed to play his part in the great adventure. Our gallant soldiers are keeping faith in the face of death and desolation; we must not fail in little things. I ask you to give three cheers for the Red Cross, which has undertaken the task of handling this vital campaign for the army."

As Stockdale and Miss Lovering walked away from the library, the latter remarked in quiet tones, "I had not expected to hear an oration from you, Mr. Stockdale. War is dreadful, but still not without its delight-

ful surprises. Is that the way you act in Boston?"

Stockdale paused a moment in thought before replying.

"I don't know that it is exactly," he answered.

"Do you mind going round by the Grand Central Station and stopping there a moment while I send a telegram?" asked Miss Lovering. "Mr. Kellen will be back in Washington tomorrow, won't he?"

"Tonight, he said," answered Stockdale.

Stockdale stood a little apart, gazing up into the blue ceiling studded with silver stars over the great waiting-room of the station. At the moment it seemed to him that there could be few more beautiful buildings in the world than this, and that it somehow expressed the joyousness of New York. Miss Lovering wrote out her telegram. It read:

"JAMES KELLEN,
American Red Cross,
Washington, D. C.

If there is still a chance for me to help in peach-stone campaign please count on me. Any sort of work will do but I want to help awfully.

KATHERINE LOVERING."

"I have finished," said Miss Lovering, turning to Stockdale. "What a lot we have accomplished, and there is still time for our walk, is n't there?"

They strolled out of the station, down 44th Street, turned up Fifth Avenue and, facing the setting sun, walked slowly towards the Park, quiet, thoughtful and happy.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

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I

MAJOR MIXTER of the Signal Corps was frequently alluded to in connection with the phrase "the salt of the earth," which was a pity, as it robbed the language of the precise words needed to describe his wife. Mrs. Mixter had been a famous beauty in her youth, and now in middle age was a strikingly handsome matron. Candor compels the admission that she manifested a decided tendency to what may politely be called amplitude in her still fine figure; but her complexion was that of a child, her large hazel eyes were like those attributed by Virgil to Juno, there were few silver threads among the gold of her hair, and she might still have sat for the picture of a Gainsborough Duchess. When she was a young girl she had been laughingly called by her companions "the aristocrat," and if the word is taken in its true meaning, Mrs. Mixter

was still a simon-pure aristocrat, and would never be anything else. There was such perfect poise in her bearing and such gracious dignity in her manners that it was a rest merely to be in her presence. She did not know what it was to fuss or fret, and had never been "rattled" in her life.

It must be confessed that circumstances had contributed to make such a happy state of affairs possible. Born rich and to a position that made care as to worldly matters not only unnecessary but a patent absurdity, Mary Livingstone as a girl had not allowed her mind to concern itself with mean or petty interests. Without effort she came, she saw, she conquered. She was not intellectually brilliant and disdained mere cleverness, but her sane good sense was abounding and her outlook on life was as broad as it was charitable. Whether it was a question of selecting the guests for a dinner party or advising her husband as to one of the momentous problems which were constantly arising as to his career, she was as certain to do the right thing as the four seasons of the year were to roll round in their course. Indeed, to her husband Mary Mixter was at once a beacon light and a

sheet anchor. Without her steadying influence there is no knowing to what erratic courses his lively imagination and impetuous fancies might have led him.

There was nothing arbitrary or imperative about this influence. Major Mixter never felt the slightest sense of restraint. The anchor rope was long enough to allow him not only to ride with the tide, but to swing freely about to different points of the compass as winds of chance or whim varied. But he never got adrift. Mrs. Mixter did not, perhaps could not, share actively in all her husband's kaleidoscopic interests, but the realization that she was always there behind him, true and constant as the polar star, gave him a sense of security and confidence which was the greatest factor in his happiness. Jack Mixter and his wife understood each other perfectly, and this was as much responsible for their happiness as the fact that neither had ceased to adore the other as the ideal of all that was best and most lovable in life.

"Jack," said Mrs. Mixter at breakfast one morning in about the middle of the month of September, 1918, "I have been thinking about that little Jew you called

over to our table when we were lunching at the Shoreham yesterday and introduced to me. He talked very nicely; somehow I can't seem to get him out of my mind. He appeared to me to be a sick man." Mrs. Mixter's habitual manner of speaking was leisurely and deliberate; in fact might be described as a pleasantly modulated drawl.

"That is what Bob Stockdale has been saying for the last three weeks," answered her husband. "Rosenthal is in his office, and Stockdale is quite worried about him. I am sorry, because Rosenthal is a good fellow."

"Hear, hear!" chorused Lieut. William Eccles, U. S. N., who had been Major Mixter's house guest since late spring, and was for the time being quite a member of the family. "I had a long session with Rosenthal the other day about some old junk at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. He knows his business and is sincere and single-minded. He has got his eye right on his job. He taught a lot to little Willie, but then I'm a good pupil."

Major Mixter smiled sardonically. "Yes, you are," he remarked, obviously

speaking by contraries. "How about that time you passed on the orders for camouflaging the transport Mudjekeewis, and got the blue where the pink ought to be? Lord knows what would have happened if they had n't discovered the mistake in time. Another score for the little U-boats, I guess, due to our old shore-going sea-dog. Did I tell you about that, Molly? Poor old Bill here—"

"Really," said Mrs. Mixter, "I think I know all I need about poor old Bill and poor young Jack. He is only ten years older than you, Billy, but of course still a mere child. What I am interested in now is poor Mr. Rosenthal. Tell me about him."

"Let the jolly tar try his hand," said Major Mixter as he poured himself a second cup of coffee. "He has spun many a stirring yarn by the galley fire at the corner of 17th and G Streets. It is about all he does do, too."

"If rude Boreas will cease from railing a moment," remarked Eccles, "I 'll tell you all about Rosenthal in two two's, Molly. He is a junk dealer; home town, Cleveland, Ohio; position in Washington, Principal Assistant, Junk Section, Camp Service Divi-

sion, Office of Quartermaster General; age, forty-nine years, — I asked him; color, outside approximately white, or Caucasian, inside unqualifiedly white; hours of labor, 8.30 A. M. to 9.30 P. M., except on Saturdays, when he knocks off at six and goes back to his hotel room to have an outing, — writing to his family; favorite avocation or amusement, not known; favorite colors, red, white and blue; height, five feet five inches; weight, less than it was. How is that, Jack? Pretty accurate?"

"Not bad," assented Mixter genially. "A very good sort of rude, rough outline; quite all that could be expected from an uneducated man. I need only add that he has a wife and one child, a son, who was a senior at Harvard at the time when we got into the war, and who is in France with the 26th Division; the so-called Yankee Division, consisting of National Guard troops. He has n't brought Mrs. Rosenthal on to Washington because he wants to keep his own house open 'in case,' as he puts it, 'anything should happen.' Besides, Mrs. Rosenthal is one of the head Red Crossers in Cleveland, and he thinks her duty lies there. Rosenthal is a tremendous worker,

clear-headed and able, but, like so many Jews, sensitive and with a good deal of temperament."

Mrs. Mixter nodded her head. "How did you find all that out, Jack?" she asked.

"I was in the same office for a while," answered her husband, "and saw a good deal of him."

"You were with the Camp Service Division last Spring, were n't you?" said Mrs. Mixter. "I had almost forgotten."

"No wonder," observed Eccles. "That was his last job but six. However, he made quite a stay there. They did n't find him out for nearly three months."

"General Gish asked me to come back there again only yesterday," said Mixter, grinning.

"My husband is a very popular person," observed Mrs. Mixter, "and of course everyone wants him. You ought to know that, Billy."

"Love is blind," returned Lieut. Eccles, as he transferred a poached egg to his plate.

"What you both say," pursued Mrs. Mixter somewhat meditatively, "really quite convinces me. Yes, I am sure I am right."

"You would n't be likely to be anything else," observed Eccles seriously.

"True for you, Billy!" said Mixter. "Tell us what you have been thinking, Molly."

"That the little man I met yesterday is overworked almost to the verge of a breakdown; and, worse than that, is deadly homesick, and lonely to a degree that neither of you could understand. It has worn him down to the raw edge of his whole being. In fact, he is going to have a complete collapse very soon, physical and mental, if he is n't taken in hand."

Mixter and Eccles looked suddenly serious. It never occurred to either of them to question Mrs. Mixter's estimate of the situation.

"I did n't know it was as bad as that," said the former in rather startled tones.

"Has he any special friends here?" inquired Mrs. Mixter.

Her husband knitted his brows in thought. It was a problem he had not hitherto considered, and already he began to feel pangs of a conscience which, although somewhat of the happy-go-lucky variety, needed only a trifling stimulus to

become almost morbidly acute where the welfare of others was concerned. One word his wife had uttered had pierced his tender heart as though a knife had been driven through it,—"lonely." To Jack Mixter, with friends as numerous as trees in a forest, and whose gregarious nature demanded companionship for every one of his waking hours, the idea that anyone should be going about the world "lonely" represented the acme of desolation. He had always understood, of course, that there were certain strange individuals who, for some inexplicable reason, did not care for people. It was natural for him to place in this class anyone who appeared in greater or less degree to lead a solitary life. It was not to be supposed that in a world brimming over with agreeable people anyone should lack pleasant companionship if he desired it. But here was a man whom the casual chance of war times had thrown in his path, and therefore someone to be considered and if possible made comfortable and happy, in a most lamentable condition. Rosenthal, it appeared, was lonely—so lonely that it was wearing him down to the raw. This was a nice how-de-do. And all he, Mixter, had

done about it was to chat pleasantly when he happened to meet Rosenthal. He was genuinely disturbed when he answered his wife's question.

"No," he said, "he hasn't any special friends, so far as I know. Stockdale is quite chummy with him."

"Chummy?" queried Mrs. Mixter.

"Talks with him a lot when things are slow at the office; is really interested in him, you know, and all that," replied her husband.

"Goes out to lunch with him perhaps?" suggested Mrs. Mixter.

"Very likely," answered Mixter. "I don't really know."

"Do you?"

"Do I what?"

"Go out to lunch with him?"

"I never happened to," said Major Mixter. "I wish I had." He was by this time looking quite miserable.

Mrs. Mixter smiled at her husband across the table.

"Now, Jack," she counselled him, "don't let that runaway conscience of yours start galloping. You haven't done anything wrong. I wanted to find out what the facts

were before I made any suggestions. How would it do to ask Mr. Rosenthal to send for his wife and for both of them to make us a two weeks visit here? He won't go away evidently, and yet he must be taken out of himself somehow if he is going to get well at all."

The clouds fled from Major Mixter's face. That terrible word "lonely" was going to receive the knock-out blow it deserved. Hardly had he begun to experience a sense of relief on this score, however, when what remained of his pre-war, conventional attitude towards life stirred a trifle uneasily and propounded the suggestion that to have the Rosenthals as house guests was a somewhat radical experiment. His answer to his wife's proposal reflected a decidedly mixed state of mind.

"By Jove, that's a bully idea, Molly," he exclaimed. "You are a wonder. But do you really want to do it? Rosenthal is a good fellow, as I've said; but— Besides, you can't tell what his wife would be like. It's risking a nuisance to have them here, isn't it?"

Mrs. Mixter had already decided precisely what should be done if the proposed

visit turned out to create an impossible situation when it actually took place. It was not her habit, however, to lay bare all her mental processes, even to her husband. Perhaps this self-restraint was in part the secret of her influence.

"Why do you think I left the children and came back to Washington a full month earlier than we had planned?" she asked.

"I rather supposed it was to see me," replied her husband in quite confident tones.

"To take care of you," corrected his wife, "and of your friends, so far as they need taking care of."

"That means me, for one," interjected Lieut. Eccles. "I am about fed-up with Jack and other masculine society."

"Men who have put their shoulder to the wheel to help out are your friends, Jack," went on Mrs. Mixter. "I know you too well to doubt that. There are only two kinds of people for me in the world today: those whose hearts are in the task of beating the silly Germans, and others. I haven't time or inclination to make smaller distinctions. Mr. Rosenthal quite evidently is willing to share in the horrid work that the

decent people of the world are uniting to do; work as dreadful as cleaning out a neglected sewer, or putting down a riot in an insane asylum. You won't get me to pretend that there is anything good about war, Jack. I see too much of its misery, even here where we are all really quite out of it. Now, please telephone Mr. Rosenthal today. Find out the address of his wife, and I will write to her. Tell him we want them to come as soon as possible."

"I suppose I know him well enough to ask them?" said Major Mixter in a semi-interrogative tone, being in truth still in a rather perplexed state of mind at the novelty of his wife's proposal.

"If I were a nurse in a hospital in France," answered his wife, "I should n't feel it at all necessary to consider my degree of acquaintanceship with a wounded soldier before I decided whether I could take care of him or not."

"After all," suggested Mixter, "the case is n't quite the same. Rosenthal is n't in the trenches."

"No," agreed Mrs. Mixter, her customary drawl becoming a trifle more pronounced, "and from a man's point of view

that makes all the difference. Because he isn't in the trenches he may suffer agonies and not deserve any consideration. It doesn't matter in the least whether he eats his heart out or cripples himself for life or dies. He is not in the trenches, and consequently it is rather an outrage to think of him at all. I know perfectly well, without your telling me, that that is the way you men feel. Of course, you would all think precisely alike about it; just like a lot of sheep. It wouldn't be the thing to have any independent ideas. It would be horrible to say what you really thought; worse than horrible, it would be eccentric. Sheep mustn't be eccentric. But I'm a woman, Jack, and I am not the least bit afraid of describing things as they are."

Mrs. Mixter paused for a moment, and then went on, with a little laugh. "Talk about men calling a spade a spade, — they would have to make the most minute investigation as to popular opinion before they assumed the risk of even calling it a shovel."

Mrs. Mixter's humor was not precisely scintillating, but such as it was it gave her great satisfaction.

"You won't mind if we have them, will you, Billy?" queried Major Mixter.

"Mind?" repeated the Lieutenant. "I'll eat it up."

Mixter rose from his chair, and going to a side table selected a cigarette and lighted it.

"It's time we were off," he said. "I'll do my best, Molly, to make Rosenthal feel we want them."

"No one can do that sort of thing better than you, Jack," replied Mrs. Mixter.

II

After reporting at his own office, Major Mixter ran down in his car to the corner of 10th and N Streets, where the Camp Service Division O. Q. M. G. was located. A personal interview, he decided, was better than the telephone. Mrs. Mixter had done her husband no more than justice when she said he did this sort of thing well. Execution was Jack Mixter's strong point. Molly might suggest a kindly action, but not even she could perform it more gracefully than her husband. On the whole, as good Samaritans they were an effective team.

"Hello, Rosenthal," said Major Mixter. "I thought I would look you up this morning. I've got something I want to ask you."

The little man seated behind the large desk raised his eyes in response to the greeting and a pleased smile came over his worn face.

"Awfully glad to see you, Major," he said. "Sit down. It always seems natural and pleasant to have you back here, even if it's only for a call."

Major Mixter took a chair and gave a searching though apparently casual look at the man he had come to see.

Mr. Rosenthal's small figure somehow looked very thin and wasted. There were black circles under his pale blue eyes. The disproportionately large nose looked pinched and sharp, and the thin hair, brushed back over his bald head, gave him an almost uncanny and gnome-like aspect. His hands fluttered to and fro over the desk, and he seemed all the time to be bracing himself for an effort. It was as though he feared what might happen if he permitted himself to relax.

A little more than a year ago Julius

Rosenthal had been asked to come to Washington because an expert junk man was needed to help handle problems having to do with the salvage of waste in the great cantonments and army posts that had sprung up all over the country, and Rosenthal was one of the best known men in the United States in that sort of business. Overjoyed that it was thought he could be of assistance to the nation in its dark hour he had set out full of the spirit of sacrifice and eager to place his services at the disposal of the military authorities who had called for him. He had thrown himself heart and soul into his work, and made his section the most efficient in the whole Camp Service Division; but it had been a constant fight against discouragement, hampering conditions and abnormal methods. The military way of conducting business made him feel as though he were working in a straightjacket. He could not accustom himself to the interminable red tape involved in even a simple transaction, and more or less unconsciously harbored a smouldering resentment that such things were thought necessary. With few exceptions he found people in Washington hard and self-cen-

tered, and so outside of office hours he stuck very closely to his hotel near the Capitol, having practically no amusement and little companionship. Thoughts he had in plenty: about the queerness of the life he was leading, almost as strange as though he had been condemned to live with aborigines in a tree-house in Borneo; about the incredible reports he read in the newspapers of doings on the western front; about his son actually there,—there where the noise alone drove men insane. Sometimes his heart would stop beating and the blood in his veins turn to ice. He could not make things seem real. Life was all upside down; a chaos; a bad dream. Some months ago he had been surprised and disturbed to find himself completely tired out after a day's work but gradually had come to realize that it needed every atom of his strength to get through his daily round. To do that he was doggedly determined; whether he should ever be able to do more had become a matter of indifference.

"My wife and I want you and Mrs. Rosenthal to make us a little visit," said Mixter. "We are all alone now, except for Eccles, and he doesn't count. We

thought it would be a good chance to see something of people before the children come on. It's a fearfully big house, and as dreary as a barn when there's no one there but ourselves. We mean to ask several people before November, but only one couple at a time, because that is really more comfortable. We wish you would come as soon as Mrs. Rosenthal can get on here. I hope you will both give us the pleasure of your company for a couple of weeks."

Julius Rosenthal looked at Major Mixter with something like panic in his eyes. Only last night he had lain awake for hours dreading that he would be unable to answer a letter on the morrow, or reply accurately to some question of his chief, because his mind had suddenly become a blank. It seemed as though already he had all the problems to deal with that he could possibly face, and here was another, and of a new and unaccustomed sort. His head gave a quick, jerky, involuntary shake.

"That is so nice of you," he said, in answer to Major Mixter's suggestion, "and so kind of your wife. Thank her for me. But I am afraid it is impossible. You see, Major, I am very much tied down. And

Rebecca, my wife, could n't leave home, I am sure. You see, there is so much to do that we must all save our strength for that. No, Major, you 're very good, but it is impossible."

As the difficulties involved in stepping outside the routine life he had lived for many months presented themselves to Rosenthal's mind, his fears grew and he became excited.

"No, no, Major," he went on in pleading tones, "it would n't do at all. You are very kind, but I really could n't leave my present quarters even for a little while. And Rebecca — she is very much of a home body. And then my boy, Ralph — he writes to me at my hotel here, and there would be a delay in my getting letters. No, Major, you are very kind, but I think you had best just let it alone."

The tones became supplicating. Suddenly Rosenthal felt as though he could not endure the presence of a visitor who brought with him such a disturbing atmosphere for a moment longer. Besides, there was creeping over him that longing, which he hated but could not resist, to indulge in thoughts he dreaded. On a recent trip

back from New York his train had stopped for several minutes opposite a troop-train going in the opposite direction. The spectacle that then met his eyes had since that time appeared with startling vividness at unexpected moments. Hundreds and hundreds of strong, vigorous, happy-looking young men penned up like cattle, and like cattle being sent forth to slaughter. Why could n't some one, any one, stop such horrors? Rosenthal wanted to think; it became necessary to him to get rid of Major Mixter, politely if possible; but at any rate to make him go. His eyes fell on a mass of correspondence on his desk.

"It 's awfully nice to see you, Major," he went on, "and I can't tell you how glad I am you looked in. But I know you are busy, and you must n't waste too much time here."

He gazed fixedly at the letters on his desk.

"Now, look here, old man," said Major Mixter, "I know just how you are feeling, because I went through the same thing myself once, — five years ago. You 're in a rut, and that is n't a safe place to stay, especially in times like these. Besides, you

are trying to take in this whole war in one gulp. It can't be done. Attempting it just makes your thoughts go round and round like a squirrel in a cage. 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' That means, as I understand it, take things as they come day by day. You can't handle all the events of the next six months this morning. You are all right, of course; there is really nothing the matter with you; but we all have to have a little change now and then."

Rosenthal stiffened in his chair as though suddenly galvanized by Major Mixter's remarks, but only said with something of a catch in his voice, "I don't think Ralph is getting much change."

"You don't really know anything about it," said Mixter emphatically. "For all you know, he may be having the time of his life; at any rate, I will bet he never felt in such good health in his life."

Mr. Rosenthal shook his head.

"For all I know, he may be lying dead at this moment," he said. He stared at the wall opposite, and a shudder passed over his spare frame.

"I know how you feel," said Mixter, "but it isn't the right way to feel, just the

same. The question is how your wife is feeling; think of her a little bit. Would n't it cheer her up to come on and be with you for a while? Don't you want to see your wife?"

Rosenthal stared at the speaker. Want to see Rebecca? Was Major Mixter trying to insult a sorely harassed man? Why, if he could only see Rebecca the whole world would look different; the terrible difficulties which piled up higher and higher every day would disappear as if by magic; he would breathe freely; he could sleep at night, actually sleep. But what was the use of yearning to see his wife? He had gone over all that in his mind many times, and it was not likely that a stranger like Major Mixter could tell him anything new on the subject. He could not leave Washington, and now something equally impossible and absurd was being suggested to him. It involved endless complications; it would interfere with his work, the work he was doing for the sake of Ralph and the country. Why did Major Mixter discuss such nonsense?

Mixter met his gaze steadily, indeed somewhat sternly.

"I am asking you to think of your wife for a moment," he said in firm tones. "Isn't it strain enough for her to have her boy overseas without your breaking down? Don't you want to see your wife?"

Rosenthal continued to stare at the Major, and suddenly something inside of him gave a snap and almost caused him to gasp for breath. The hunted look in his eyes disappeared, the deep lines around his mouth were smoothed away, the towering well-like wall his imagination had built around him tumbled down, and for the moment he saw clearly.

"Why, of course I do," said Mr. Rosenthal. "There is nothing in the world I want to do so much."

"Then you'll come?" asked the Major.

Rosenthal nodded.

"Come soon," went on Mixter. "My wife will write to Mrs. Rosenthal today, and if she can start at once we will expect you Thursday."

"You're awfully kind," said Mr. Rosenthal.

"Well, you be kind too," said Mixter, "and promise me one thing. Telegraph your wife today, and then don't think

any more about it until it is time for you to meet her at the station. Is that agreed?"

Rosenthal nodded. His heart was too full for utterance. Miracles were in the air; the impossible was about to happen. He was going to see Rebecca.

Mixter stopped at Stockdale's office on the way out.

"Look here, Bob," he remarked. "I've just been in talking to Rosenthal. He and his wife are coming to visit us. He's sicker than you thought. You'd better keep an eye on him. Take him out somewhere for the next evening or two. Don't let him work at night. You'll do it, won't you?"

"Rather!" exclaimed Stockdale. I have been trying to make him go away. I can't persuade him. As a matter of fact, I have been begging him to dine with me on and off for the last two weeks; but he won't come."

"He will now," said Mixter. "You try it."

He paused for a moment and went on, "It's all nonsense, you know, Bob, people thinking that no one but the men in the trenches need any attention. I don't know

who started such a silly idea, but it's all rot anyway. You don't want to let people die all around you, just because they aren't in the trenches. Another thing, you don't want to sit and bite your thumb wondering whether you know people well enough to do anything for them or not. Do you suppose a nurse in a hospital in France stops to consider her degree of acquaintanceship with a wounded soldier before she decides whether she can take care of him or not? Honestly, the way some people reason makes me tired. I tell you it's time to wake up a bit and say what you really think, not follow whatever the first person says, like a lot of sheep. I believe in describing things as they are. Call a spade a spade, is what I say."

Stockdale gazed at his friend steadfastly during this outburst. "You've done the best thing you could for Rosenthal," he said. "He won't leave Washington, but this is the next thing to it. You are a good fellow, Jack."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Mixter, "there's nothing good about it. Besides," he added, "I had nothing to do with it; it's Molly. Good-bye, old top! See you later."

III

On the day on which his wife was to arrive Rosenthal left his office a full hour earlier than was necessary to cover the distance to the Union Station, where the train bearing Rebecca would arrive at four in the afternoon. He stepped over to the little park lying between the various buildings of the Smithsonian Institute, very near the domicile of the Camp Service Division O. Q. M. G., and sat down on one of the benches. In an hour, in a few moments really, Rebecca would be with him! He was going to see her here where his work was,—and for two whole weeks. It seemed as though a lifetime of happiness lay before him. He decided he would actually neglect the office a little in order that he might spend more time with Rebecca, and show her the sights of Washington. They had been here on their honeymoon twenty-five years ago. Rebecca would think things had changed some! Still there was a lot which was just as it had been: the Capitol, the White House, the monument. They would see it all again together. And

the Smithsonian Institute. He raised his eyes and stared at the old red brick building before him. How Rebecca had revelled in the gowns of the Presidents' wives displayed within those walls! To Rebecca, being in Washington would be a sightseeing holiday, and here was he come to regard the Smithsonian Institute merely as a landmark near his place of business. Rosenthal began to feel quite like Marco Polo, or some other seasoned traveller. Rebecca would be surprised at the offhand way her husband treated famous places. Rosenthal chuckled aloud. He didn't know when he had been so happy; never, it seemed. And only three days ago when he got up in the morning, and all the way walking to the office, the sky had looked black, not figuratively but actually black, although the sun had been shining brightly at the time. Certainly he had been getting in a bad way, but Major Mixter had somehow made him see that even for the sake of his work he mustn't go on as he had been doing. It frightened him now to remember what his state of mind had been. It was too queer; he had been living for months in a nightmare. How had it hap-

pened? he wondered. He felt tired now, worn out really; but things had taken on a normal aspect; he was not oppressed continually by a sense of unreasoning fear, and that was all that mattered. As long as that did n't come back he was quite content to feel tired and exhausted. He gave a sigh of happy relief, and started to walk down to Pennsylvania Avenue on his way to the station.

A very happy couple arrived at the Mixter house on New Hampshire Avenue late that afternoon. Mrs. Rosenthal proved to be a really handsome woman, with jet black hair, bright black eyes, and entire refinement of manner. Before dinner she and Mrs. Mixter had a confidential talk.

"I could n't have felt we ought to accept your very kind invitation," she said, "if you had not told us what you did in your letter about Julius. I blame myself so much. I had no idea he had been so miserable. His letters were always cheerful. Oh, dear; it has been so hard to know what it was right to do lately. I am afraid I have n't done all a wife should, and Julius has always been a perfect husband to me." Tears came into the little woman's eyes.

"It has not been easy for any of us to know what we really ought to do," replied Mrs. Mixter. "We can only move step by step as things come before us, hoping that all will come out right in the end."

"Julius looks so awfully," sobbed his wife.

"My dear," said Mrs. Mixter, "he will look like a different man in a day or two now. We must all make him have a good time and really enjoy himself. That is the only cure for his sort of illness."

"I am sure I will try," said Mrs. Rosenthal, still sobbing. "I don't feel as though I could leave him for a minute."

"I was going to suggest," went on her hostess, "that you take the car every day at noon and go down and take Mr. Rosenthal out to lunch. That will make him very happy. In the evenings we can stay here and talk quietly, or perhaps go to the theatre occasionally; and we might motor down to Mount Vernon on Sunday."

"You are so good," said Mrs. Rosenthal. "Why are you so good to us?"

"Because your husband is a brave soldier," answered Mary Mixter, smiling, "and everybody loves a soldier today."

"I will tell Julius that," said his wife. "He is afraid he has made a failure of his work, and will be so glad to know people think he has n't."

The days passed happily, and therefore very quickly. The Rosenthals went sightseeing all over Washington, as though it were their honeymoon days again. At the home dinners Lieut. Eccles proved to be the best possible tonic. His somewhat bizarre style of conversation, while it mystified Mrs. Rosenthal, caused her husband to laugh as he had never expected to laugh again.

One afternoon they all motored across the river to Arlington. It was at the close of a perfect day, and as they stood in front of the dignified old Lee Mansion and looked across the Potomac to Washington the tranquil, lovely scene brought peace and solace to the hearts of each. Over Potomac Park hovered two aeroplanes. As they looked, one of them turned nose downward and dropped like a falling leaf to within a hundred feet of the ground, when it righted itself and soared up again. The dome of the Capitol, the monument and the church spires stood out against the sky above the

countless buildings of Washington, and in the early twilight the city and the river made an almost magic picture. There stood in beauty like a dream, Freedom's citadel, — the hope of a world well-nigh rent asunder. On the way back to the car Julius Rosenthal and his wife walked a little behind the others.

"These are soldiers' graves, mother," he said, "all soldiers' graves. I used to think that if Ralph should be killed it would be nothing but waste and needless tragedy. But when I realize what I feel for the men who lie here, I don't know; I almost believe I could bear it."

"I know Ralph will live," answered his wife. "Somehow I have never feared greatly for him."

"I am beginning to feel that way, too, mother," answered Rosenthal. "I can think of him now as being well and happy."

After they had returned to the house on New Hampshire Avenue Rosenthal managed to have a little talk alone with Mrs. Mixter.

"This has been the happiest time of my life," he said. "You will never know what you have done for Rebecca and me. The

world has become again what it used to be many years ago. For the last twelve months I have wondered how Rebecca and I could ever have liked Washington. Now the beauty of it has all come back. I feel so happy, so well, I could face anything now. Good-night."

As he left the room Mrs. Mixter could not help remarking how frail and delicate the little man looked. The harassed expression had given place to one of perfect contentment, but Mr. Rosenthal looked as though a breath might blow him away.

IV

The next morning at breakfast Mrs. Rosenthal appeared alone.

"Julius is not at all well," she said. "I think I would like to have a doctor see him." Her face looked almost haggard.

"By Jove, that is too bad," exclaimed Major Mixter. "I will call Dr. Owen at once on the telephone. He is the best in Washington. What seems to be the matter?"

"He coughs a great deal and his head

aches, and I think he has a fever," answered Mrs. Rosenthal.

Major Mixter glanced quickly at his wife. "Keep him in bed until the doctor comes. It is always well to be careful, although this is probably nothing but a cold." But Major Mixter looked worried.

"Molly," he said to his wife when they were alone together after breakfast, "I'll bet a hat it's the influenza. The town is full of it. Dr. Owen will be here by eleven. Talk things over with him, and he will tell you what precautions to take. I don't want you to take any chances."

"Don't worry, Jack," answered his wife, "I am not a bit afraid of contagious diseases. I am thankful the children aren't here; but there is nothing for the rest of us to be disturbed about."

"You are a trump, Molly," said Jack Mixter as he kissed his wife good-bye, "but don't take unnecessary risks."

Dr. Owen stopped to speak with Mrs. Mixter on his way out.

"Yes, it is the influenza," he answered, as he drew on his gloves, "and I am sorry to say a bad case. The patient appears to have no resistance. His reserve force seems

to be completely exhausted and he is in a frightfully run-down physical condition. His system was ready for any sort of disease. If it had n't been the influenza it would probably have been something else. I shall come in again this evening."

Pneumonia did not delay even the customary three days but set in almost at once. On the fourth day after that on which Rosenthal had been taken ill Mrs. Mixter had another talk with the doctor. He looked very grave.

"Do what you can to help his wife over a bad time," he said. "I have told her that it would be cruel for me to pretend that there was any hope."

That night at about ten o'clock Julius Rosenthal sent down word that he would like to speak to Major Mixter a moment.

"Go, Jack," said his wife. "Tell him we are thinking of him."

Julius Rosenthal lay tossing on a bed of fever. His pale blue eyes were unnaturally bright, his hands plucked constantly at the coverlet, his cheeks were sunken, and a racking cough shook his frame almost continually.

"Good of you to come up, Major. I

can't thank you for all you have done. I've been so happy. I am so happy now. I know I'm a desperately sick man. I am not going to get well. If it was n't for Rebecca I would be glad. I see now what a wonderful opportunity I've had here in Washington. Just think of it, I was asked to come here and work for the Army, for the Country, here where all the best and biggest men in America have come. What a chance for Julius Rosenthal, junk dealer! I hope I've made good at it. God knows I've tried. To be called and to have failed would be more than I could bear. I've hated it, and I've suffered, but I've stuck to my work. And it was worth doing. Every little helps. I've had a part in the great crusade. It all looks differently to me now. I don't believe I could ever go back to my own business, even if I lived. It was too small a life. I've suffered, but I've lived in the midst of great events; the greatest the world has ever seen. I've learned to know what a man's country means to him. No, I could n't go back. And somehow I feel as though Ralph was all right. I can't explain it, but it's so."

A great fit of coughing shook the little

man from head to foot. Exhausted, he closed his eyes and lay silent in a state almost of coma.

More than three thousand miles away, Sergeant Rosenthal stepped briskly out in front of his company, saluted and stood at attention. A smooth-faced, white-haired officer wearing two stars on his shoulders returned the salute and then read solemnly from a paper in his hand:

> "Rosenthal, Ralph, Sergeant Company M 610th Infantry. (A.S. No. 4,383,209). For extraordinary heroism in action near Longuyon, France. Taking command of his platoon after its commander had been seriously wounded, Sergeant Rosenthal led it with remarkable daring through heavy machine-gun fire and captured three machine-gun nests. Returning to his own lines Sergeant Rosenthal sent the remaining members of the platoon ahead and himself carried in on his shoulders under heavy fire a wounded American officer. Home address, Mrs. J. Rosenthal, mother, 28 Shartle St., Cleveland, Ohio."

The general stepped forward and pinned a decoration on Ralph Rosenthal's breast.

"I congratulate you, Sergeant," he said, and held out his hand.

Sergeant Rosenthal shook hands, saluted and stepped back to his place in the ranks with glowing eyes, while the cheers of his company rent the air.

Julius Rosenthal turned uneasily in bed, and opening his eyes gazed fixedly at Major Mixter.

"Somehow I am sure Ralph is all right," he said earnestly, "that he is well and doing his duty. It makes me proud and happy to be part of the army in which my boy is a gallant soldier. Good-night, Major, and thank you again."

Major Mixter's eyes were dim.

"Good-night, old man," he said, patting for a moment the hand on the coverlet. "I'll send your wife in to you. Good-night. I'll see you in the morning."

Rosenthal nodded. "Perhaps so," he said with a faint smile. But before dawn Julius Rosenthal had laid down his life for his country.

THE PEACE BELLS

THE PEACE BELLS

I

VICTORY was in the air. The hurrying crowds of officers, government clerks and civilian war workers that thronged the streets of Washington from eight-thirty to nine A. M. every day, wore a holiday appearance on the morning of November 6, 1918. The city had been cheering up for the last two weeks. Drawn faces, indicative of nerves almost cracking under routine and strain, were replaced by broadly smiling countenances that looked out on a new world. The grass in Lafayette Square took on a brighter hue of green, the calm dignity of the White House seemed once again to have come into its own, while the dome of the Capitol beamed over all Washington in the bright sunlight. The dove of peace had not yet alighted on the Washington monument, but as Mixter, adopting Mr. Bright's fa-

mous allusion, had remarked the evening before, if you listened you could almost hear the beating of its wings.

Down in the office of the Camp Service Division O. Q. M. G. at the corner of Tenth and N Streets, General Gish, military martinet by profession, jumping over the traces of a habit of twenty years' standing, responded to Stockdale's formal greeting of "Good-morning, Sir," with the remark, "Hullo, old man!" The section heads of the Division postponed attention to business long enough to exchange cheerful bits of gossip and rumored items of good news with one another. Stenographers taking dictation were inclined to be conversational, and second lieutenants forgot their uniforms and took on the manners and bearing of college boys after a football game. Stockdale, who was leaving at noon for a five days' vacation at the country house of his friend Tom Montgomery down on Chesapeake Bay, five miles from Annapolis, decided that the first and most pressing business of the day was to indite a note to Miss Lovering, who was to be one of the house-party. The two had met with increasing frequency since her return to Washington in late Septem-

ber, and there had grown up between them something like a genuine intimacy. Her hair the color of daffodils and her air of high breeding, charming though they were, had come to mean less to Stockdale than her frank and downright willingness to be her real self, and a very wholesome and lovable self it was, even in casual social intercourse. The war had affected many persons of both sexes in just that way. Stockdale's epistolary style had become somewhat cramped and stereotyped by reason of the number of letters he had written during the last ten months, according to the approved formula for military corespondence, but he did his best.

"Do you want an excuse for a little outdoor exercise?" he asked first lieutenant William Price, who was one of the assistants in the Legal Section. "If so, take this note to that address on K Street, will you?"

First Lieutenant William Price accepted the letter eagerly, put on his cap, stood at attention and remarked gravely, "K Street? Very well. I will be back at two o'clock."

"Don't hurry," called out Stockdale as the lieutenant closed the door behind him.

II

As the limousine which was to convey her to Camp Shiloh and thence to the Montgomerys' house crossed the bridge over the Potomac River and struck out into the open country, Miss Lovering leaned back and opened the letter which had been handed to her just as she left her house in Washington. It was written on very official looking paper, and ran as follows:

"*From:* Her humblest admirer.
To: The beautiful Miss Lovering.
Subject: Proposition regarding transportation.

1. It having come to the attention of this office that you are to play at the concert to be given at Base Hospital No. 34, Camp Shiloh, this afternoon, you are informed that the undersigned is an intimate friend of Col. Dawson, commanding the aforesaid Base Hospital, and that he intends to be present at the concert.
2. It appearing from an oral report of Thomas Montgomery, Esq., of Carter Hall, near Annapolis, that you are to motor to his residence from Camp Shiloh after the concert referred to in the preceding paragraph, the writer humbly

beseeches that you will take him along with you on this stage of your journey. Otherwise he will be compelled to retrace his steps to Annapolis Junction and thence proceed by trolley, which, considering the way those cars bang around, is more than should be asked of any man.

3. This proposition has received the approval of all the officials of the Quartermaster's Department in any way concerned therewith, and the undersigned takes the liberty of congratulating you on this opportunity to serve your country.
4. Is n't the war news wonderful?

Respectfully,

ROBERT STOCKDALE.

P.S. I hope you are going to sing as well as play."

As has been said, the day was bright and cheerful, and Miss Lovering smiled happily.

Stockdale arrived at the Base Hospital too late for the beginning of the concert. He stopped for only a moment's chat with Col. Dawson in his office, and then, guided by an orderly, went down the almost interminably long passageways of the hospital to the recreation room on the surgical side. At most of the Cantonments in the country the Red Cross had built commodious and

well-appointed convalescent houses or solariums. At Camp Shiloh, however, owing to a misunderstanding with the Commanding General, this building was not yet completed, and Col. Dawson continued to use two of his hospital wards as rest rooms for men on the road to recovery. After all, they were the most cheerful and attractive places in the entire camp, and had been the means of bringing many a man back to normal health in record time.

Stockdale found the music room, as it was called, crowded almost to overflowing with more than two hundred men in khaki seated in chairs arranged in orderly rows and occupying the entire ward except a narrow aisle down the centre and a small space at the end opposite the door, which was reserved for the piano and the performers. Stockdale wedged himself in behind the last row of chairs, and looked about through the blue haze of tobacco smoke which was pouring out from a hundred mouths. The walls of the room were draped with the flags of all the Allied Nations, and were hung with a great variety of bright colored pictures, sporting prints and so on, as well as handsome steel engrav-

ings of Washington, Lincoln, Grant and Wilson. A dozen or more of the men present wore dressing gowns, and were propped up in leather-backed Morris chairs, while as many more wheel chairs testified to the eagerness of convalescents to attend the Red Cross concert if the thing were possible. The great majority of the men, so far as Stockdale could observe, looked hearty and cheerful. At any rate, there was a distinct atmosphere of exhilaration over the gathering, although the silent attention during the singing and playing left nothing to be desired. Katherine Lovering stood a little to the left of the piano, her violin under her chin, her head a little on one side, her eyes dreamy with the music, playing the haunting melody of the Barcarolle from the Tales of Hoffman. As she finished there was a moment's silence, and then came a burst of hand-clapping and a roar of applause that threatened to raise the roof of the recreation room. "More! More! More!" shouted the men in khaki; and Miss Lovering, her face glowing with delight, played the Barcarolle again. There was no mistaking the joy she felt in her employment. Many times had she done the same thing

before; and nearer the front than any of her present auditors were now likely to get. As she played she almost felt within herself the glow and exultation of those other men in France, and in her heart there welled up a deep and joyful feeling of thankfulness to God that the slaughter and suffering were nearly over.

Apparently it was the really good music which the men enjoyed most. The attempt of Mr. Dalton, who sang, to bring himself down to what he erroneously supposed was the level of his audience, was hardly successful. The pseudo-comic ditty in which, suiting the action to the word, he declared,

> "I sing a little tenor, —
> I sing a little barytone, —
> Also sing a little base,"

did not meet with much enthusiasm. Mr. Dalton more than made up for this, however, by his really magnificent singing of "The Kavanaugh." As he came to the last verse, a voice from the audience joined in with his, a tenor voice so high and true and sweet that Stockdale felt himself gripped by emotion and, after the song was over, joined the men in shouting, "Smithy!"

"Smithy!" "Make him sing Joan of Arc!" And when Smithy, routed out by the Red Cross Field Director, who acted as Master of Ceremonies, hobbled forward on his crutches and sang "Joan of Arc" with a voice which might have belonged to one of the heavenly choir, Stockdale's demand for an encore represented a genuine enthusiasm. Before he had heard half he wanted to hear it was time for the concert to end.

Miss Lovering came forward, her violin under her chin and her head a little on one side. She looked appealingly at the men before her. "I am going to play, and to try and sing, 'The Long, Long Trail.' Won't you sing it with me?"

There was no answer, except adoring glances from more than two hundred men in khaki, but when the verse was ended a mighty chorus joyfully proclaimed,

> "There 's a long, long trail a-winding,
> Into the land of my dreams."

"Three cheers for the concert," shouted Sergeant Cubbins, as the last note died away. Then, "Three cheers for the violin!"

"Shall we hurry along?" asked Miss Lovering as Stockdale, the room having nearly emptied, made his way to her side. "The request for transportation is approved and allowed," she added.

"I beg your pardon, Miss," said a red-faced hospital orderly, his tall khaki-clad form towering over Miss Lovering, "but I wonder if you 'd come and play just one piece in my ward? I 've got four men there who were smashed up awful bad in a motor truck accident, and I know it would do them a lot of good."

"It is allowed, is n't it?" asked Miss Lovering, appealing to the Red Cross man.

"We 'll chance it anyhow," he answered, "if you have the time."

There were at least a dozen men lying in bed in Surgical Ward 19; four of the faces looked frail and wan, with pain and suffering. Standing just inside the door, Miss Lovering played as she had never played before. There was joy in her heart, and sympathy and love. She played again and again. Finally she lowered her violin. "I must go now," she said. "Good-night. There 's a better time coming soon. The war is ending."

"Good-night; thank you; good-night," came back a grateful chorus.

Carrying her violin, Stockdale escorted Miss Lovering back towards the Administrative Offices. "Did you like it?" she asked, glancing at him as they started down the long, connecting, horizontal passageway, deserted at this time of night.

"Almost as much as the men it was given for," answered Stockdale.

"Do you think they liked it?" pursued Miss Lovering.

"I thought even the cripples would leap from their seats and fly to you when you asked them to join you in singing 'The Long, Long Trail.'" He paused a moment and looked at his companion. "And I should n't have blamed them if they had," he added.

For what followed, one person was entirely responsible. Coming a trifle nearer to Stockdale, Miss Lovering put her head a little on one side, smiled provokingly, and said, "Won't you sing it with me?"

Without hesitation Stockdale bent forward quickly and kissed her. Miss Lovering's cheeks flamed scarlet, but she uttered not a word as the two walked on, and meet-

ing Col. Dawson in the entrance hall of the Administration Building, paused to say good-night.

"Well, Bob, how did you enjoy the concert?" asked the Colonel, after he had thanked Miss Lovering for her kindness in coming out to his hospital from Washington.

"I never enjoyed one better, old man," Stockdale answered. "You've got a wonderful plant here," he added irrelevantly, "and a good man at the head of it."

"Thank you," said the Colonel. "A kind word now and then isn't amiss. I thought perhaps you might stay and dine with me, and we could talk things over a bit."

"Sorry," said Stockdale, "I'm on my way to Tom Montgomery's. Miss Lovering has said she will be kind enough to take me down. Good-night, Ben. It looks as though your troubles would soon be over now."

"It looks promising, certainly," agreed the Colonel. "Good-night."

The limousine sped through the streets of the cantonment, out on to the highroad for Annapolis. They had covered a good many miles in complete silence before Miss Lovering said in a low voice, "You kissed me."

Not being able to oppose any denial to this bald statement of fact, Stockdale said nothing.

"Why did you do it?" asked Miss Lovering.

To Stockdale, brutal frankness seemed the only method of dealing with this experienced young woman of the great world.

"Because you looked as though you expected me to," he said.

Miss Lovering turned her head and gazed out of the window.

"I did," she said softly. "In fact, I made you."

Stockdale stared ahead of him with set expression.

"Did it mean anything to you, except that you were in high spirits because the war is going to end?" asked Miss Lovering, as she turned her head back from the window. Her voice sounded the least bit strange, and Stockdale's heart gave a great jump. The love that he had cherished for her for many weeks, but had not dared to speak, rushed to his lips and clamored for utterance. He held it back manfully, however, and merely repeated her own words.

"Did it mean anything to you?" he asked.

He looked down at her, and found that the fashionable Miss Lovering seemed suddenly to have become a little girl, a very little girl indeed. The blue eyes, as they looked in his, were moist with unshed tears. There was the look in them of a frightened child that craves protection. She held her lips tightly closed, as though to keep back sobs which she feared might come. She nodded her head.

"You can't mean that you care for me?" asked Stockdale, "that you love me as I do you?"

Once again Miss Lovering nodded, though her lips were closed tighter than ever.

"It isn't fair," said Stockdale. "Perhaps there are men who might deserve it; but I—"

Miss Lovering's hand rested for a moment on Stockdale's arm. "Don't say that," she said, still softly, "I am so happy."

III

The Montgomerys' house was an historic old red brick mansion, with six tall white pillars in front and a lawn that sloped for

a quarter of a mile straight away from the house to a bluff overhanging Chesapeake Bay. It stood alone on a point of land, bounded on either side by a bayou or creek running back from the bay for a mile or more. Across the water in the far distance could be seen the spires and roofs of Annapolis and the dome of the chapel of the Naval Academy.

On Thursday, the seventh of November, the day after the arrival of Miss Lovering and Stockdale, Tom Montgomery proposed that they should motor into Annapolis after lunch, while he did some chores and made some purchases. That was the way in which he phrased his suggestion, but the truth of the matter was he was anxious to hear the latest news. The Montgomerys had a son in the Service, on a destroyer off the south coast of Ireland. Tom Montgomery professed to be wholly indifferent as to the precise moment when the war should end.

"We've got them on the run," he said, "and isn't that enough? What difference does it make whether they sign an Armistice now or are smashed to smithereens next spring?"

He was a fat, jolly looking man of forty-six or seven, a classmate at Harvard of Stockdale's, although slightly older than the latter, and was reputed to have no nervous system. Mrs. Montgomery, however, knew better than that. She shook her head at him across the luncheon table when he made the remark quoted above, and observed, "You won't hear any news today, Tom."

"Nonsense," responded her husband, "I don't want any news. I thought Katherine and Bob might enjoy a little turn in the motor."

In the quaint old town of Annapolis the car drew up to the curb in front of a shop just opposite the old brick Episcopal Church.

"Be back in a minute," said Tom Montgomery, getting out from the front seat. "Got a few things to buy in here."

The fresh country air had made Miss Lovering and Stockdale drowsy, and Mrs. Montgomery, the most considerate and tactful of women, did not compel the others to talk by talking herself. All three sat quiet in the sleepy old street. The bell in the tower of the little old-fashioned church

began to ring. Stockdale looked up lazily and saw it swinging to and fro. He lowered his gaze and continued to drowse. The bell kept on ringing. Three or four minutes went by. Suddenly Mrs. Montgomery sat upright. "I wonder—" she said. Stockdale looked at her without understanding.

"There's probably a fire somewhere," he observed.

Tom Montgomery came out of the shop and climbed into the front seat, where he sat looking straight before him, but the others had noticed that his ruddy face had gone curiously white.

"Tom, what is that bell ringing for?" asked his wife, in vibrant tones. There was a moment's silence, and then Montgomery answered, "It is ringing because of the complete surrender of Germany." Mrs. Montgomery fell back limply on the cushions of the car. "Don't speak to me," she said.

"Thank God," ejaculated Stockdale.

Miss Lovering's eyes were shining like stars.

As they sped back to Carter Hall other bells took up the joyous clamor, whistles

blew, and the sleepy old town of Annapolis became for the moment a mere volume of sound.

"Having it actually happen is so different from believing that it was gong to happen," said Miss Lovering in low tones when they were all seated on the terrace at Carter Hall. Tom Montgomery made a frank and manly confession.

"Now that it is all over," he said, "I don't mind owning up that I didn't see how I was going to get through those three days the Germans were to have to consider their answer. I feel as though I could forgive them a lot for being so prompt."

Commander Wells from the Naval Academy was dining at Carter Hall that evening. "Great news, old man," exclaimed Tom Montgomery on his arrival. "I can't believe even yet the Armistice is actually signed."

Commander Wells looked almost embarrassed as he gazed on his host's jolly countenance.

"I would n't if I were you," he observed.

"Why not?" demanded Montgomery, his lower jaw falling and the brightness dying out of his eyes.

"Oh, it's coming all right; don't worry. It's time to put the champagne on ice, but I would n't open it yet. Lansing has come out with an official denial that the Armistice has been signed, or that the German Commissioners have even reached the Allied lines as yet."

It was hard work getting through dinner that night, although each person present deserved a medal for gallantry for the effort made to talk of "other things." It was even harder making the time pass on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

On Sunday Stockdale and Montgomery went off to play a foursome of golf with two naval officers on the Academy links.

"By Jove," said the latter that evening, "it seemed as though the church bells started to ring every time I had a difficult putt to make. And every time I heard them I would jump with excitement and miss my putt. After I'd done that I would recollect that it was Sunday."

Stockdale woke up the next morning while it was yet dark. He rubbed his eyes, turned on the electric light by the head of his bed, and looked at his watch. It was quarter to five o'clock. Stockdale shook

his head and putting out the light lay down again and tried to sleep. Presently he sat up once more. A faint though constant sound, apparently coming from a distance, seemed to enter with the breeze through the open window. He listened intently. It was the sound of bells,—of bells ringing in Annapolis, miles away. For an hour he lay quiet, his ears strained to catch the sound and waiting for it to stop. The bells kept on ringing. Stockdale dressed and made his way to the stairs. Coming up them, in his dressing gown, was Tom Montgomery.

"It is true this time?" asked Stockdale.

"It is true this time, old man," answered his host. "I've been telephoning since half-past four. I've got it from Annapolis, from Baltimore, from Washington. It's official."

"Then your boy is all right," said Stockdale. "No more submarines. I'm glad for you, Tom."

"I'm going in to tell my wife now," said Montgomery. "She's been awake all night. I promised her I wouldn't report anything until I was absolutely certain; I am now, thank God."

IV

Shortly after dinner that night Stockdale remarked, "Katherine and I are going out in the canoe for a bit; it is still down by the little pier, is n't it?"

"I suppose it is," answered Tom Montgomery, "but do you know what time of year it is?"

Stockdale did not answer "It's summer in my heart," as was his inclination, but instead replied, "We are only going for a short time, and Katherine can take wraps. There's a moon."

"If Katherine goes she shall wear Tom's ulster," said Mrs. Montgomery with decision.

"Give it to me," laughed Miss Lovering. "It is sure to fit."

She buttoned the ulster to the chin, and turned up the collar. It touched the ground, and Miss Lovering had to gather it up in her hands, and her skirts underneath as well, in order to walk easily. "All ready," she said.

At the head of the little creek running back from the bay Stockdale made Miss Lovering comfortable in the middle of the

canoe and taking up the paddle pushed off. The moon cast a bright path over the water, and made a soft light by which things were almost as visible as by day.

Stockdale paddled on some minutes in silence. "Katherine, are you sure you want me?" he said at length. "You are a girl, with everything before you, and I am a middle-aged man, an old man really. Are you sure you know what you are doing?"

The little-girl look had come back on Miss Lovering's face again. She nodded, her eyes fixed on those of Stockdale. "Please don't say that any more," she pleaded. "Promise."

"I promise," said Stockdale. He ran the canoe in under the bank so that it rested on bottom underneath the overhanging bows of a tall willow tree, and going forward a little sat at Miss Lovering's feet. Over the water the light breeze brought the faint sound of bells ringing in the old city of Annapolis, — the peace bells.

"The war is ended," said Stockdale. "It seems like a dream."

"I know," said Miss Lovering softly.

"The war is ended," repeated Stockdale, "and I am alive, well, and happy; happier

than I thought people could be in this world. And thousands of men, of our own men, are lying dead three thousand miles from home."

"I am thinking of the mothers," said Miss Lovering, "of the mothers all over this country who are feeling tonight a joy and peace which passeth understanding."

"But some of them—" said Stockdale softly.

"Some of them have lost everything that made life worth while. Oh, I wish I could help and comfort them," cried Miss Lovering. "I pray with all my heart that God will."

"Our men died for these mothers, for the children of the country, for you; and that is right. But they died also for me, and that somehow seems wrong." A cloud came over Stockdale's face and rested there.

"I know what you mean," said Miss Lovering in a voice which was solemn and tender. "I understand that you will always feel at times that your part was a small one; that it might perhaps have been more. I suppose that is bound to be. But if one has done something, I do not think he need torment himself too much."

"My humble thanks to the men who have fought and died for you; and for me, and for our children. To them, all honor and everlasting glory," said Stockdale.

"All glory and honor," repeated Miss Lovering. "My humble thanks also. But it will not help them or us or the world, not to allow ourselves to be happy when we can be happy; when in our hearts we are so happy, will it?"

"No," said Stockdale, looking in her eyes, "it would be ungrateful and wrong." The shade passed from his face. "Please sing," he begged.

And Katherine Lovering, leaning forward, elbows on knees, her chin resting in her hands, and her eyes on Stockdale's face, sang, sweet and low:

"There 's a long, long trail a-winding,
Into the land of my dreams,
Where the nightingale is singing,
And a white moon beams.
There 's a long, long night of waiting,
Till my dreams all come true,
Till the day when I 'll be going down
That long, long trail with you."

At the last note she held out both hands. "The night is over," she said.

POSTSCRIPT

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An American Doughboy, just returned from France, strolled happily about the streets of his native city. Although it was his intention to be very leisurely, he held himself erect, and it was impossible to prevent his steps from falling in a sort of cadence. His clear eyes looked out upon the familiar sights, confident, serene and fearless. On his left sleeve were three V-shaped gold stripes; on his right sleeve, one.

In the course of his peregrinations he happened to encounter The Man in the Street, who advanced towards him with outstretched hand.

"Shake," said that individual. "Welcome Home! My! but it is fine to have you fellows back again! Every time I see one of you with a gold stripe on his arm the weight that has been tugging at my heart for the last year and a half grows lighter. I shall never quite lose it all; I don't expect or want to do that, but it's going fast."

"Perhaps it is n't good to be back!" said the Doughboy with a grin.

The Man in the Street took the Doughboy by the arm, and the two walked on together.

"Now tell me," said the former, "if there is anything I can do for you."

There was a moment's pause, and then The Man in the Street answered his own question.

"No, of course there is n't. You are well, strong, unafraid, and in your heart is the happiness of having met the hardest test a human being can face and of coming through it one of the saviors of the world. The gratitude of every man, woman and child in the country is yours, and their admiration, reverence and love. As long as you live you will know you are a hero, just as much as Bayard, or Leonidas, or Shaw, or any one of those fellows we read about in history. And here you are walking our streets just like the rest of us." The Man in the Street shook his head contemplatively from side to side, and then went on. "No, there is nothing I can do for you. But you can do something for me."

"How so?" inquired the Doughboy.

"You can tell me a little of what you know," answered the other. "You can help me to understand all that has taken place, and to formulate my ideas for the future. Your eyes have seen and mine are blind. I can only surmise hesitatingly and with doubt. You know. Tell me."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed the Doughboy, "I haven't got anything to tell you."

"You know," repeated The Man in the Street in steadfast tones.

The Doughboy looked in his companion's eyes and saw he did indeed seek truth; and so he spoke from his heart.

"First and last," he said, "I've thought a lot about how wonderful it was that this country could put forth the tremendous effort it did; everyone pulling together, you know; nobody grouching; and all working for a single purpose. Men, money, and the most willing kind of work by all hands, women and children included; all without limit. Think what that accomplished! And it was a grand thing in itself. If we can do all that for war, why can't we do it for better things? There are lots of better things to work for than war, you know. Suppose everyone tried as hard to prevent

suffering and to give people a square deal as they did to beat Germany, — and spent only a small part of the money doing it that the war cost? We could accomplish something if we'd only try. We have shown that there is no job too big for us to tackle if we get together on it.

"It is a pity that people seem to be forgetting this already. I have been surprised at some of the things I've heard since I got back. Much of the unity, the good feeling, the sense of comradeship in working for a common cause, seems to be disappearing. It has given place to bickerings, fault finding, indiscriminate criticism and squabbling. You tell me I have done a good job. Well, I will admit that I have been happy about it, and perhaps a little proud of it, but what I am most proud about is what the whole country has done. As far as I know history I can't recall any other nation plunging into the agonies of hell more unselfishly, for a better purpose or with more effective results. It seems to me that if America ever in the whole course of its existence was entitled to hold up its head and throw its chest out a bit, it is right now. Bragging isn't quite the thing, of course, but it is

enough sight better than bellyaching. But most of the talk I hear is about the mistakes we've made; how we ought to have got into the war sooner; how this or that part of the war work fell down; how much we owe to the French, to the English, to Italy, Siam, China, to the planet Mars; to everybody but ourselves. To be sure, we landed more than two million soldiers in France across three thousand miles of submarine infested salt water; the British Tommies and French poilus say that we gave the punch which ended things; our navy certainly turned the scale in keeping the seas open; and incidentally we supplied the world with food. At least that's what I thought, but maybe I dreamed it. Anyhow I don't hear those things mentioned over here. There is lots of blame to be passed around, but no credit. I suppose perhaps it is reaction after strenuous effort, but it is a pity to react into pettiness, and meanness and spite.

"I said there are better things than war. There can't be anything much worse. There isn't a man who has been in the thick of it who has a good word to say for war. Getting killed is nothing. We've all got

to die some day. It's the beastiality and wickedness of it that hurts. When I got into our first fight it came on me as a good deal of a shock that I had been brought way across the Atlantic Ocean just to kill people, not in theory, you know, but in plain every-day fact, and that it was now up to me actually to do it. I would n't tell you about some of the things I've seen. The only thing I want to do is to forget them. You ask any of our men who were in the Argonne Forest, and see if they don't say the same. Ask men who saw some of the released English prisoners after the armistice, and get them to tell you what they think of the by-products of war. No, I was glad to do my share, because there was n't any other possible way; but now that the idea of war as a fine thing in itself has been pretty well knocked out of everyone's head, even including the Germans, I guess, men have got to find a means of settling the ordinary quarrels of nations in some other way than by spraying one another with liquid fire or filling one another's lungs with poison gas. It's too damn stupid; sheer idiocy.

"The men who do the fighting ought to

have some say about what they're fighting for. It isn't fair for half a dozen men who control the government of a country to set up a holler every time a difference arises with another country, that their nation's honor is at stake and that in consequence there is no way out but war. It would be fair enough, perhaps, if each of those half dozen men put on a private's uniform when hostilities began; but that isn't the way it works. Don't misunderstand me, now; I'm not talking about this war. There wasn't any chance for a fair solution this time. You can't reason with an insane criminal. I am talking about disputes between nations where neither one of them is crazy. And I am thinking of the talk of certain men at the Peace Conference who said the other day that the honor of their nation depended upon whether they got a certain bit of territory or not. That was a lie. The honor of a nation doesn't depend on any such matter. There mustn't be any more of that sort of thing. It's what we fought this war to prevent. If the war hasn't done that, it hasn't done much.

"We can't stop wars merely by saying we won't have them. We have got to put

something else in their place. We must fill up the void which war will leave if we want to cut it out for good and all. I don't know how it is to be done, but people ought to try and find a way."

The Man in the Street had been listening intently.

"Anything more?" he asked in earnest tones, as the Doughboy ceased talking.

The Doughboy's eyes were looking straight before him.

"You know I've seen lots of good friends die; I have realized that life in this world is a pretty temporary affair. We all know that, of course, but I had never fully realized it before; in just the way I realize this sidewalk we're on, I mean. Then, too, I've been in places myself where I didn't have the slightest hope of getting out. There didn't seem to be much help on earth."

"Well?" said The Man in the Street.

"General Foch," answered the Doughboy, "used to spend a half hour or so alone in church nearly every day, at a time when he was reasonably busy carrying the weight of the civilized world on his shoulders. I've tried it; it's a help." The Man in the

Street nodded his head in agreement. "You bet it is," he said emphatically. "Even those of us over here have had moments during the last two years when we felt the need of something different from what we could find in the newspapers or derive from chit-chat."

"There's only one thing more I am going to say," went on the Doughboy, "and it is this. When you consider the novelty of the problems which had to be dealt with, the distance from which we had to work, and the scale on which things had to be done, there's only one answer. The people of this country have accomplished the impossible. All the fault-finding and unreasoning criticism I spoke of will disappear soon. It's only scum risen to the surface and time will spoon it off and throw it away in some sewer where it belongs. But the thing I want to emphasize is that the qualities which made all this achievement possible were right there in our people all the time. War doesn't make people over. The most it can do is to bring out what is in them.

"It ought to help things in the future to remember what Americans are capable of doing. I hope we won't hear any more

talk of the U. S. A. being merely a geographical expression or any cheap glorification of other nations at the expense of our own.

"In the long years of peace for which we all hope and pray, when there will be no opportunity for a Spot-light display of the willingness of our people to suffer, to sacrifice, and to work together for the common good, I am not going to be troubled in my mind by surface indications. I shall know that deep down, the ability, and the faith, and the will, are there always."

"This is mighty interesting," said The Man in the Street. "I have been anxious for a long time to know what you fellows thought. The rest of us realize that all this work you speak of, from that of the President down was merely auxiliary. The actual job had to be done by the American doughboy; and you did it. It is the opinion of you men who have done the job that is going to decide things in the U. S. A. for a considerable period; as long as we live, I guess. It's only fair, and it's right."

"The Doughboy laughed. "You never can tell," he answered, still smiling.

"At any rate what you've said has been a help. It's what I wanted to know."

"If you really mean that," said the Doughboy shyly, "there is something you can do for me."

"What is that?" asked the Man in the Street eagerly.

"Write it out so people can read it. Good-bye."

"Good-bye and good luck!" said The Man in the Street heartily. He walked away in deep thought. "Yes," he said to himself, "I will try to do that."