THE BLINDED SOLDIERS AND SAILORS GIFT BOOK

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THE BLINDED SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' GIFT BOOK

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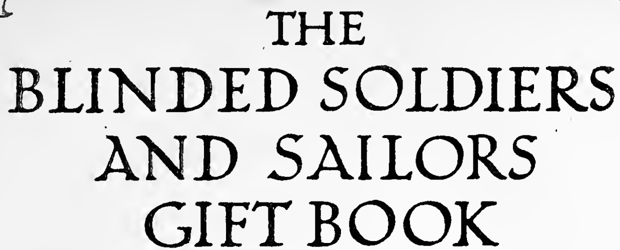
THE BLINDED SOLDIER.
BY
HUGH THOMSON.



Edited by
George Goodchild

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FOREWORD.

In compiling the present work no regular plan has been observed. It is merely intended as a Gift Book which, in addition to fulfilling its object in this respect, aims at helping those brave fellows who have suffered one of the worst misfortunes that can befall a human being. Among all the tragical figures of the war none are more deserving of our sympathy and help than those whose injuries—received in defence of the Empire—are of the nature of permanent blindness.

It is impossible to imagine so dire a calamity. Blindness cannot be experienced by the mere closing of one's eyes; that is merely a superficial imitation free of the crushing sense of isolation which the consciousness of permanent darkness imparts. Sightless persons seldom speak of their sensations, and we are consequently ignorant of what it at first entails. It is the dreadful unpreparedness which terrifies; the awfulness of a sudden plunge into a world hitherto unimagined. Such a blow is all the more terrible when its victims are—as is the case with most of our present victims—full of the vigour of youth, overrunning with the vitality of glorious health. To such the terrors of modern warfare with its dangers and horrors are as nothing compared with this overwhelming calamity. The misery of it one can only gauge by observation. During a visit to

St. Dunstan's, the writer saw a young man groping his way across the hall guided by the arm of a nurse. His eyes were wide open but lightless and obviously insensible to his surroundings. He was very similar to half a dozen others in his near vicinity, save that the muscles of his face worked a little spasmodically, and his mouth was shut firm with an occasional slight movement at one corner. One saw just what it meant to him. Later on he would accustom himself to it so far as is humanly possible, and doubtless enjoy the compensating comfort of soul which a merciful Providence must surely impart to such men.

But there are other things to be done. It is not sufficient that a man shall be merely comforted by consciousness of the nobility of his sacrifice. He must be taught to employ his strength and intelligence to some useful purpose, that he may thereby enjoy that state of material independence which is the aim and object of all self-respecting men. To this end Mr. C. Arthur Pearson and his able staff have directed their efforts.

At St. Dunstan's, Regent's Park, Braille reading, writing, and typewriting are taught them, and instruction is given in carpentry, boot-repairing, mat-making, basket-making, massage, poultry farming, and market gardening. Upon the completion of their instruction the men return to their own homes, where they may carry on the trades they have learned.

All profits accruing from the sale of the present volume will be set aside and handed over to Mr. C. Arthur Pearson for the benefit of the brave fellows at St. Dunstan's; and every purchaser of this volume may feel that he or she has directly contributed towards the welfare of those who have sacrificed so much in defence of our national ideals.

The warmest thanks are due to the contributors who have so generously given of their art and their time in the interest of this cause. All the more is this so when one remembers the innumerable calls which have already been made upon the artistic professions by charitable causes. It is devoutly hoped that the success of the present book may be such that the Fund may benefit very considerably, in which event the contributors will consider themselves well repaid.

Special thanks are due to Mr. C. Sheridan Jones, from whose original suggestion the idea of this book was evolved.

G. G.

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IN THE DARK.

BY ROBERT HICHENS.

UNTIL I became a special constable and took to patrolling by night, I did not realise that there are a great many people who never allow themselves to be in the dark, a great many people who cannot even sleep without a light in the room. How do I know this? Well, I do not actually know it; I infer it. I have been out, not in London but in a country district where there are a great many scattered houses, villas and cottages and bungalows, at all hours of the night, from twilight in winter till the winter dawn. Sometimes I have gone on duty from ten o'clock till midnight, sometimes from midnight till two o'clock, sometimes from two till four, or from four till six; but there has never been an hour when all the houses I passed slowly by were dark. Always there have been windows in which, behind the flimsy blinds, lights were burning.

At first, as I passed these lighted windows in the dead of the night, or in the earliest hours of the morning, those hours when human vitality is at its lowest ebb, I used to think, "Someone must be ill in that cottage," or "There's a sufferer from insomnia in there under the eaves"; or "Can there be some ardent searcher after knowledge, some seaside Faust, bending over ancient volumes behind that yellow blind?" Perhaps I turned on my electric torch, and held it to gate or door, and read by its light, "Happy

Cot," "Laurel Grove," "The Cedars," or "Balaclava"; and then I stood for a moment wondering in the silence and the blackness of the still, or windy, night. Three in the morning, perhaps, and a light still burning! It seemed extraordinary in a country place by the sea where people had little of gaiety or amusement to keep them up.

But presently I realised that these mysterious squares of light, scattered here and there in the inky blackness, did not necessarily betoken wakefulness. The explanation of them was simple enough. There are many people who always sleep in lighted rooms, who cannot bear to be in darkness. They are unreasonably afraid of it, perhaps, like children, or they feel as if it would crush them, or they think of it as something suffocating, like the poisonous gas used by the Germans against our troops in Flanders. So they set a lamp, or candle, or perhaps a homely "night light" beside the bed. Then they feel safe and comfortable. It's all right. They are not in the dark.

Sometimes, as I passed those lighted windows in the night, and thought of the sleepers within, I wondered what they would feel if they were stricken with blindness.

As a rule men are not highly imaginative. I doubt if they often imaginatively enter into the troubles and tragedies of their fellow-men. They are frequently kind and sympathetic. When they hear of some heavy blow falling on a friend or a neighbour, they are genuinely sorry, in their way. They say, perhaps, "Poor old chap! It's fearfully hard lines on him!" And they mean it. But, as Tolstoy with his deadly sincerity points out in one of his greatest stories, very often at the backs of their minds is the lurking thought, "After all it's a good thing that blow fell on him instead of on me." He's got to stand it, your friend or your

neighbour, and you haven't. And how is he going to stand it? Well, that isn't your affair.

I believe those who are stricken with great misfortunes often suffer intensely from the lack of sympathetic imagination in those who are about them. They feel they are alone in the knowledge of what their misfortune really means, and this is indeed a loneliness that may be felt.

In a huge war such as this struggle in which the greater part of Europe is now involved, the demands upon our sympathy are often in excess of our power of response. Many of us become dulled by the repeated strokes of Fate. We are not unkind. We have warm hearts. We mean well. But we have only a certain power of feeling, and when that power is too sharply and continuously tried, a sort of emotional collapse takes place within us. And then we fall into the habit of expressing what we no longer feel. We do lip service to tragedy, even perhaps to the tragedy of blindness.

When I am out on night duty and see the lighted windows of those who cannot even sleep in the dark, I often think of the men who have given their eyes to their country, who have returned from the Front to the new life at home, the life in the dark. Among the hundreds of thousands of soldiers who have left our shores since this war began I suppose few, if any, have not had the thought in their minds, as the transports pushed out into the sea, "I wonder if I shall ever see old England again?" And probably not one of them, when thinking that very natural thought, has envisaged anything but the end—death. "I wonder if I shall be killed out there in Flanders?"

And yet upon the ships English soldiers have come back to England who will never see England again. They

are here in the midst of us now. They have left their sight at the Front.

It's a good deal to give to your country, isn't it? It may be called a generous gift. Are we grateful enough for it, we who collectively are England?

Maimed soldiers are as a rule so simple and uncomplaining that they lead us, the unmaimed, who for various reasons have not had to face what they have faced, into danger—the danger of being ungrateful. They say so little that they almost tempt some of us to do little for them. Out of the fulness of the heart sometimes only a very beautiful, a very touching, and a very great and noble thing comes—silence. Behind their silence, nevertheless, be sure that the soldiers are thinking; they are watching us, they are "sizing us up," they are judging us who have not, as they have, risked literally everything for England, that is, for us. And behind their silence the soldiers are feeling. If we are ungrateful to those who make no clamour for sympathy, who lift no loud lamentations to our ears, we shall be ugly, almost as ugly as the Germans at whose ugliness the whole world shudders.

Maeterlinck has written of the august silence of the mothers stricken in this cruel war; the silence of the stricken soldiers is not less august.

Now and then a soldier speaks out just what is in his mind, not in complaint, but simply, as a man moved to be frank, to say a word or two of truth. Not long ago a gunner who was in the retreat from Mons, and who was severely wounded in the advance which immediately followed it, was talking to me about war, and the many men broken by it. He had been in the Boer War when he was only sixteen, and returned to the army to help us against the Germans.

"I hope," he said, "England will behave better to the fellows who are disabled in this war than she did to those who were knocked to bits in South Africa."

I asked him for details. He gave me a few. And he concluded his remarks, which were not bitter, with these words:

"England isn't a generous country."

He did not say it angrily; he said it wistfully.

When I see the lighted windows in the dead of the night and think of the men in the dark, I often remember those words.

We must prove them false now while this war is still raging; we must prove them false when the war is over, whether we lose or win. And no men need more the proof of England's gratitude than the men in the dark, the men who will never see England again.

Shut your eyes for a moment and think of their sacrifice; put out that candle by your bedside, you who sleep in a lighted room, and for a moment go with them into the darkness. You cannot sleep in the dark, but they are learning to work in the dark, so that they may be able to earn their livelihood. The courage of the battlefield is succeeded by the courage of the workshop. They saw the battlefield; the workshop they cannot see. Which requires of men the greater courage, the seen battlefield or the unseen workshop?

A long while ago, after the South African War, I was walking on a terrace in Sicily looking out on perhaps the most marvellous view in Europe. The day was brilliant, a blue and gold day of the south; the white smoke from Etna floated up to the deep blue sky; on the blue sea here and there a white sail faded away, going perhaps to the

African coast. In front of me two men walked slowly up and down under the palms and the roses that climbed among the palms. Presently I heard one of them speaking. He was minutely describing the view to the other. And the other ? He was a soldier most of you have heard of who was blinded in the South African War. On that day for the first time I felt as if I understood something of the inner meaning of blindness. Probably I was wrong, probably I understood almost nothing, or nothing of what it means to live in the dark. But ever since that day I have thought very often about blindness.

A question that has come to some of us in connection with this war is this: Are we in England going to live in the dark when the war is over ? I think that perhaps if we could look into the minds and souls of some of the blinded soldiers we should find that they see more than we do, that they discern horizons which are as yet far beyond our vision. Perhaps upon the battlefields from which they have returned they, who, like many of us, have walked in darkness, have been allowed to see a great light. And by that light they may see us, not as we wish to seem to them and to all the soldiers, but as we are. They may even feel, some of them, that we are more in the dark than they are. For they have done a great thing that we have not done, and, perhaps, because of that, they are in secret pitying us. Soldiers are not great in expression, but now and then they drop words that pierce to the marrow, words which come out of minds terribly close to Truth.

"England isn't a generous country."

Many of those who have watched England during the last few years, the years before the war, have been anxious for England. Egoism, selfishness, an almost crazy passion

for amusement, for change, for luxury, for aimless movement, for show and for pretence, were rampant in all classes of society. Old-fashioned people, and some who were not old-fashioned but who were merely thoughtful, and who cared for England, said, "Where will it end?" We all know now where it has ended; it has ended in blood and fire and tears, in effort, self-sacrifice and the purest heroism. Many have attained to the heights; among them are the soldiers who have given their eyes for the cause of England. They are in the dark, but from their heights they can see a vast prospect, nevertheless, such as men can see from no sunlit valley; and they can feel and hear the great winds, those mighty winds which come, like the voices of Eternity, singing over the world from a place where there is morning. They have been worthy, our blind soldiers. Let us be worthy of them. Never again will they see England; but let them feel the hands of England closing on theirs, and in the pressure let them feel the gratitude of England.

Robert Hichens.

THE BLACK CAP.

BY WALTER EMANUEL.

HUGH LANKESTER stumbled out into the open.

The great doctor had passed sentence. It was a black cap case. Hugh Lankester was to lose his sight.

Sir William had not said it in so many words. But there was no doubt left in Lankester's mind. Lankester had had no idea things had gone so far when he decided to consult Sir William. Suddenly, something that Sir William said startled him, and Lankester had asked him point-blank:

"Shall I go blind?"

"You follow my treatment carefully," answered the doctor, "and I think we shall get you all right. You've been overworking yourself; you must give up all thoughts of the exam. for the present. You'll have to use your sight sparingly now. You must take to dark glasses. You must——"

"Yes, but you don't tell me. Shall I go blind?" Lankester had interrupted, almost rudely.

"Your sight *may* last you many years."

"Thanks."

"It all comes from brain wear. You've been fidgeting about that exam. You must leave town for a while, and go into the country, and forget that there are such things as books as quickly as possible. Amuse yourself. On no

account allow yourself to be depressed. Good-bye, and let me see you again in a month. Meanwhile, keep up your pecker."

The great doctor, a stern person to look at, had spoken almost tenderly.

And now Hugh Lankester was outside.

"Curse Elphinstone!" he muttered.

Elphinstone was the man, a former schoolfellow of Lankester's, now walking the hospitals, who had advised him to go and see the great doctor. Lankester had met him one afternoon—it was one of his bad days—and had told him of the curious tricks his eyes were playing him.

"They get all misty," he explained.

Elphinstone looked grave, and said:

"Take my advice, old man, and go to a specialist."

Lankester said he would take the advice. But when he got home, and looked at his eyes in the glass, he could see that there was nothing at all the matter with them, and he set Elphinstone down as an alarmist. Then, in a few days, he ran across Elphinstone again.

"Well, have you been to an oculist?" he asked.

"No."

Elphinstone then told him plainly that it was criminal to delay the thing like that.

"I'll go after my exam.," said Lankester.

"No, go to-morrow," said Elphinstone.

Finally, Lankester promised he would go within a week.

And now he had been, and he was cursing the man who had sent him. If a fellow had to go blind—well, let it come suddenly and unexpectedly. Far better so than to have to sit at home watching for it day by day. Curse Elphinstone!

Curse everyone! Why the devil did they all get in his way? He was hurrying down Oxford Street now—he did not quite know where to—and people kept running into him, and jostling up against him as he passed.

"Curse you!" he cried savagely to a child who got in his path, and the child ran off howling to its mother.

Then, by a strange irony, he knocked into an old blind man who was standing on the kerb, and upset his tray of matches.

"Shame!" said a woman. "Look what you've done, you clumsy lout—and him blind, too."

Lankester turned.

"What's that? Blind, do you say? Poor devil! I didn't know that. You can't see at all? Ah, that's bad. God knows I'm sorry for you. It must be hard not to see—cruel hard—devilish hard. Here."

And he took a half-sovereign from his pocket and gave it to the man.

"You are generous, my lord," said the woman, who thought it was a farthing.

Lankester continued on his way. At last he got a stretch of pavement to himself, which set him free to think again. Well, one thing, at any rate, was pretty certain, it was all up with his career. The Indian Civil Service would have to try and get along without the aid of Hugh Lankester. He supposed, by-the-by, that the old man would stump up all right. Or would he have to walk the streets, led by a mongrel cur, selling matches?

"Fusees, a yaypenny a box; pity the poor blind man!" he rehearsed between his teeth.

The idea tickled him, and he smiled. Then, suddenly, he thought of Ethel, and got serious again. Ethel! Ah!

that was the worst. That was where it hit hardest. Of course he could not—would not—marry her now. He must let her off. And yet—he *might* get better. For what had the doctor said? "Your sight may last you many years." What a duffer he was to make up his mind for the worst! That was just like him. Perhaps, after all, the sight would not give out. And yet—what was the good of deceiving himself? That had only been a way of putting it. The doctor knew well enough it would go, and soon. It was not to be doubted. He must give up Ethel. Under the circumstances he could not expect her to marry him. Imagine pleasure-loving little Ethel wedded to a blind man —or, at best, a man with black goggles! He laughed aloud at the idea. . . . For a moment he felt remarkably like breaking down. . . . Then he began to wonder whether he should have warning of it, or would it come quite suddenly? Why hadn't he asked the doctor that? But, of course, the sight would gradually get weaker and weaker until it went out altogether. That is how it would be. Well, he knew what he would do as soon as he felt it coming. He was not going to live in darkness all his life. Hugh Lankester was not quite such a fool as that. Not quite.

He had reached Bond Street. Two ladies bowed to him. It did not strike him till they had passed that he had not raised his hat to them. Hang it all, how abominably rude they must have thought him! He *must* wake up. He stretched his eyes. How strong the sun was! Then he fell to thinking again. He called to mind how once, at an "At Home," about a couple of years ago, a palmistry woman had examined his hand, and had said:

"You won't have a very long life—you'll commit suicide."

At the time he had treated it as a good joke.

But suppose, after all, the thing should come suddenly, without warning? It was just possible. Then it would be too late: he would not be able to see to do anything. . . . *Better, perhaps, to have done with it at once.* Yes, yes. No, not quite at once, though. He would enjoy himself well for a week, and then—— How should he do it? He must buy a pistol. Or poison? No, poison was a woman's way. Better get the pistol. Still, poison was cleaner. And yet he did not know. Pistol—poison? Poison—pistol? Pistol——

Suddenly he stopped, and put his hand to his eyes.

"Hell!" he cried, staggering back against a shop window. "Hell!—it's come."

People ran up.

"It's come!" he cried, "it's come! . . . But it's too soon. It's not fair, it's not fair."

"What's come?" asked the crowd.

"It—it. Oh! turn up the light—turn up the light; *won't* somebody turn up the light?"

He tore at his eyes.

The eyes were still open, but the sight was gone.

They led him away.

"Five pounds to the man who'll kill me! Ten pounds! A hundred pounds! Oh, for mercy's sake!—is there no Christian here who'll do it!"

"Billay!" shouted an urchin, "'ere's a bloke off 'is nut."

Walter Emanuel

MISS REVUE

BY

HARRY FOLKARD

MISS REVUE.

THE RECRUIT.

BY JOHN GALSWORTHY.

SEVERAL times since that fateful Fourth of August he had said: "I sh'll 'ave to go."

The farmer and his wife would look at him, he with a sort of amusement, she with a sort of compassion in her heart, and one or other would reply smiling: "That's all right, Tom, there's plenty Germans yet. Yu wait a bit."

His mother, too, who came daily from the cottage in the combe on the edge of the hill, to work in the kitchen and farm dairy, would turn her dark, taciturn head, with still plentiful black hair, towards his face that for all its tan was so weirdly reminiscent of a withered baby, pinkish and light-lashed, with forelock and fair hair thin and rumpled, and small blue eyes; and she would mutter:

"Don't yu never fret, boy. They'll come for 'ee fast enough when they want 'ee." No one, least of all perhaps his mother, could take quite seriously that little square, short-footed man, born, under the rose, when she was just seventeen. Sure of work because he was first-rate with every kind of beast, he was yet not looked on as being quite "all there." He could neither read nor write, had scarcely ever been outside the parish, and then only in a shandrydan on a Unionist Club treat, and he knew no more of the world than the native of a small South Sea Island. His life from childhood on had been passed year in, year out, from dawn

till dark, with the cattle and their calves, the sheep, the horses and the wild moor-ponies; except when hay or corn harvest, or any exceptionally exacting festival absorbed him for the moment. From shyness he never went into the pub., and so had missed the greater part of village education. He could of course enjoy no papers, a map was to him but a mystic mass of marks and colours; he had never seen the sea, never a ship; no water broader than the parish streams; until the war had never met anything more like a soldier than the constable of the neighbouring village. But he had seen a sailor in his uniform. What sort of creatures these Germans were to him—who knows? They were cruel—he had grasped that. Something noxious, perhaps, like the adders whose backs he broke with his stick; something dangerous like the chained dog at Shaptor farm, or the big bull at Vannacombe. When the war first broke out, and they had called the young blacksmith (a reservist and noted village marksman) back to his regiment, the little cowman had smiled and said: "Wait till regiment gets to front, Jim'll soon shoot 'em up."

But weeks and months went by, and it was always the Germans, the Germans; Jim had clearly not yet shot them up; and now one and now another went off from the village, and two from the farm itself; and the great Jim returned, slightly injured, for a few weeks' rest; full of whisky from morning till night, he made the village ring, and finally went off again in a mood of manifest reluctance. All this weighed dumbly on the mind of the little cowman, the more heavily that because of his inarticulate shyness he could never talk that weight away, nor could anyone by talk relieve him, no premises of knowledge or vision being there. From sheer physical contagion he felt the grizzly menace in the air,

and a sense of being left behind when others were going to meet that menace with their fists, as it might be. There was something proud and sturdy in the little man, even in the look of him, for all that he was " poor old Tom," who brought a smile on the mouths of all. He was passionate, too, if rubbed up the wrong way; but it needed the malevolence and ingenuity of human beings to annoy him—with his beasts he never lost his temper, so that they had perfect confidence in him. He resembled, indeed, herdsmen of the Alps, whom one may see in dumb communion with their creatures up in those high solitudes; for he, too, dwelt in a high solitude cut off from real fellowship with men and women by lack of knowledge and by the supercilious pity in them. Living in such a remote world his talk—when he did say something—had ever the surprising quality attaching to the thoughts of those to whom the normal proportions of things are quite unknown. His short, square figure, hatless and rarely coated in any weather, dotting from foot to foot, a bit of stick in one hand, and often a straw in the mouth—he did not smoke—was familiar in the yard, where he turned the handle of the separator, in the fields and cowsheds, from daybreak to dusk, save for the hours of dinner and tea, which he ate in the farm kitchen, making sparse and surprising comments. To his peculiar whistles and calls the cattle and calves, for all their rumination and stubborn shyness, were amazingly responsive. It was a pretty sight to see them pushing against each other round him—after all he was as much the source of their subsistence, especially through the scanty winter months, as a mother starling to her unfledged young.

When the Government issued their request to householders to return the names of those of military age ready

to serve if called on, he heard of it, and stopped munching to say in his abrupt fashion: "I'll go fight the Germans." The farmer did not put him down, but said to his wife:

"'Twidden be 'ardly fair—they'd be makin' game of 'im."

And his wife, her eyes shining with motherliness, answered: "Poor lad, he's not fit-like."

The months went on—winter passing to spring; and the slow decking of the trees and fields began with leaves and flowers, with butterflies and the songs of birds. How far the little cowman would notice such a thing as that no one could ever have said, devoid as he was of the vocabulary of beauty, but like all the world his heart must have felt warmer and lighter under his old waistcoat, and perhaps more than most hearts, for he could often be seen standing stock-still in the fields, his browning face turned to the sun.

Less and less he heard talk of Germans—dogged acceptance of the state of war having settled on that far countryside—the beggars were not beaten and killed off yet, but they would be in good time. It was unpleasant to think of them more than could be helped. Once in a way a youth went off and "'listed," but though the parish had given more perhaps than the average, a good few of military age still clung to life as they had known it. Then some bright spirit conceived the notion that the county regiment should march through the remoter districts to rouse them up.

The cuckoo had been singing now five days; the lanes and fields, the woods and the village-green were as Joseph's coat, so varied and so bright the foliage, from the golden oak buds to the brilliant little lime-tree leaves, the feathery green shoots of larches, and the already darkening bunches of the sycamores. The earth was dry—no rain for a fortnight.

The cars containing the brown-clad men and a recruiting band drew up before the inn. Here were clustered the farmers, the innkeeper, the grey-haired postman; by the church gate and before the school-yard were knots of girls and children, schoolmistress, schoolmaster, parson; down on the lower green stood a group of likely youths, an old labourer or two; and apart from human beings, as was his wont, the little cowman in brown corduroys tied below the knee, an old waistcoat, the sleeves of a blue shirt dotted with pink rolled up to the elbows of his brown arms, and his brown neck and shaven-looking head quite bare. So he stood, with his bit of stick wedged between his waist and the ground, staring with his light-lashed, water-blue eyes from under the thatch of his forelock.

The speeches rolled forth glib; the khaki-clad men drank their second fill that morning of coffee and cider; the little cowman stood straight and still, his head drawn back. Two figures—officers, men who had been at the front—detached themselves and came towards the group of likely youths. These wavered a little, were silent, sniggered, stood their ground—the khaki-clad figures passed among them. Hackneyed words, jests, the touch of flattery, changing swiftly to chaff—all the customary performance, hollow and pathetic; and then the two re-emerged; their hands clenched, their eyes shifting here and there, their lips drawn back in fixed smiles. They had failed, and were trying to hide it. They must not show contempt—the young slackers might yet come in, when the band played.

The cars were filled again, the band struck up "It's a long, long way to Tipperary."

And at the edge of the green, within two yards of the car's dusty passage, the little cowman stood apart and stared.

His face was red. Behind him they were cheering—the parson and farmers, schoolchildren, girls, and even the group of youths. He alone did not cheer, but his face grew redder. When the dust above the road and the distant blare of Tipperary had dispersed and died, he walked back to the farm, dotting from one to other of his short feet. All that afternoon and evening he spoke no word; but that flush seemed to have settled in his face for good and all. He milked some cows, but forgot to bring the pails up. Two of his precious cows he left unmilked till their distressful lowing caused the farmer's wife to go down and see. There he was, standing against a gate, moving his brown neck from side to side like an animal in pain, oblivious seemingly of everything. She spoke to him:

"What's matter, Tam?"

All he could answer was: "I'se goin', I'se goin'."

She milked the cows herself.

For the next three days he could settle to nothing, leaving his jobs half done, speaking to no one save to say: "I'se goin'; I'se got to go." Even the beasts looked at him surprised.

On Saturday the farmer, having consulted with his wife, said quietly:

"Well, Tam, don't yu never get excited, ef yu want to go, yu shall. I'll drive 'ee down Monday. Us won't du nothin' to keep yu back."

The little cowman nodded. But he was restless as ever all through that Sunday, eating nothing.

On Monday morning, arrayed in his best clothes, he got into the dog-cart. There, without good-bye to anyone, not even to his beasts, he sat staring straight before him, square, and jolting up and down beside the farmer, who

turned on him now and then a dubious, almost anxious, eye.

So they drove the eleven miles to the recruiting station. He got down and entered, the farmer with him.

"Well, my lad," they asked him, "what d'you want to join?"

"Royal Marines."

It was a shock. The farmer took him by the arm.

"Why, yu'm an Exmoor man, Tam; better take county regiment. An't they gude enough for yu?"

Shaking his head he answered: "Royal Marines."

Was it the glamour of the words, or what, that moved him to wish to join that outlandish corps? There was the wish immovable; they took him to the recruiting station for the Royal Marines.

Stretching up his short, square body and blowing out his cheeks to increase his height, he was put before the reading board. His eyes were splendid; little that passed in the hedgerows, the heavens, on the hillsides, could escape them. They asked him to read the print.

"L."

"No, my lad, you're guessing."

"L."

The farmer plucked at the recruiting officer's sleeve, his face twitched, and he whispered hoarsely:

"'E don' know 'is alphabet."

The officer turned and contemplated that figure with the browned face so reminiscent of a withered baby, and the little blue eyes staring out from under the dusty forelock. He grunted kindly; then going up and laying a hand on his shoulder, said:

"*Your* heart's all right, my lad, but you can't pass."

Without a word the little cowman turned, and went out. An hour later he sat again beside the farmer on the way home, staring before him and jolting up and down, by no sign or word intimating what—if anything—he felt. But that evening he ate his tea.

Next day he had settled down again among his beasts.

THE INWARD RADIANCE

BY

EDMUND GOSSE

THE INWARD RADIANCE.

I.

To God, the eternal Lord of Light, I cried, " Behold !
  Who are these luckless men who stumble in the gloom ?
Wherefore has fallen the cloud with which Thou dost enfold
    Thy beauty and their bloom ?

II.

While all around me glow and fulminate the bright
  White spaces of the sky, refulgent and benign,
These climb with faltering steps the staircase of the night,
    And see no star of Thine ! "

III.

The answer came : " But these *have* seen My star of war !
  The blood-red planet of my sword unscabbarded ;
They saw it blaze across the sombre hills afar,
    And hailed it where it bled.

IV.

And, lo ! it smote them sore, so that that scarlet flash
  Was borne on the last ray that filled their radiant eyes,
Drowning their souls in shout of waters and the crash
    Of shrill artilleries.

V.

Yet am I always with them in the darkness still
I calm them with a beam of secret light divine;
Their spirits, like an emptied cup, My hands re-fill
With purer, stronger wine.

VI.

My servant, Memory, comes to paint at My behest
The walls of that dark cell which is their teeming brain
With blowing trees, a rose, a sunset in the west,
Blue moorlands after rain;

VII.

And love, the love of home, of England for whose sake
With gallant hearts they made their glittering sacrifice,
In subtle pencilled shafts of coloured dawn shall break,
And flood their inward eyes."

Edmund Gosse

May 15, 1915.

THE SONG

BY

Claude A. Shepperson,

A.R.W.S.

THE SONG.

MISS BITTERN'S CORONATION.

By Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler.

It was tea-time at Windybrook Farm; and the tea-party was discussing—as was everybody in England at that time—the progress of the European War. Mrs. Wylie, the mistress of the farm, was a Methodist, as were also her guests, Miss Skiddow and Miss Bittern; and the assembly was particularly honoured by the presence of the Reverend Stephen Mills, the new minister of that circuit. Mr. Mills had only come to Windygate, the neighbouring village, last Conference; and as Conference fell in August, and this was only September, he was still surrounded by the halo of novelty. He had never "travelled" in a country circuit before: his work had hitherto lain in crowded towns; but so long a spell of slum-work had exhausted his physical and nervous force, and the Conference had allotted to him a country circuit where he might take things easily, and recuperate his enfeebled powers: and incidentally where he might also live for a time in close communion with Nature, and so learn some of the lessons which Job was made to learn when the Lord answered him out of the whirlwind.

Mrs. Wylie was a sober and godly matron, who feared God and despised Man with equal fervour; Miss Skiddow concealed the sentimental heart of a girl in the breast of a pallid and washed-out old maid; Miss Bittern was dark

and tall and forbidding, with a warped nature and an acid tongue; and they were all three on that side of fifty which an old bishop once described as "the sunny side, because it is the side nearest Heaven."

"The thing that interests me so much in the war is that we are on the same side as the Russians," remarked Miss Skiddow. "The Russians always seem to me such wonderful people." The little spinster had a keen nose for anything that savoured of romance.

Not so Mrs. Wylie. "I don't see why they are more wonderful than anybody else, Annie, when you come to that: not to them as knows them. I suppose we are all more or less wonderful to foreigners."

It occurred to Mr. Mills that a foreigner would have to be very foreign indeed before he applied such an epithet as "wonderful" to anything connected with Mrs. Wylie; but he wisely did not give expression to this thought.

"Oh! they are so mysterious and picturesque," replied Annie Skiddow; "and make me think of the wilds of Siberia and the mysteries of the Eastern Church, and all sorts of strange and wonderful things."

Mrs. Wylie shook her head. "They don't me: they only make me think of wolves and Russia leather. I remember reading a story when I was a child about some people who drove about Siberia in a sledge, and kept throwing their children one by one to the wolves to keep them quiet. Fortunately they had a large family, and so were able to get safe and sound to their journey's end."

Mr. Mills wanted to laugh, but again wisely refrained. His work among the poor had taught him the value of self-restraint—especially where his sense of humour was concerned.

"And my father had a Russia leather purse," continued Mrs. Wylie, "given him as a prize at a spelling-bee held in the Leterbury circuit. It smelt something beautiful. Mother always kept it in her pocket-handkerchief drawer for that very reason."

"And what does Russia make Miss Bittern think of, I wonder?" asked Mr. Mills, endeavouring to draw into conversation the one silent member of the party.

Miss Bittern sniffed scornfully. "It makes me think of what everything else makes me think of, namely, the cruelty of God in making all those millions of human beings without asking them whether they want to be made or not!"

"For shame, Maria!" exclaimed the hostess. "It is wrong to speak against the Lord at any time, but especially in the presence of a minister."

"Not at all, Mrs. Wylie," said Mr. Mills gently. "If Miss Bittern has hard thoughts of God it is to one of His ministers that she ought to express them. As His ambassador it is my duty to explain the actions of my King to those who do not understand them for themselves."

"You'll have a deal to explain away if you begin to explain His dealings towards me," retorted the spinster bitterly.

"Well, anyway, I will try; and if I, His minister, fail, then doubtless He will explain Himself. Are you a Methodist, Miss Bittern?"

Miss Bittern shook her head. "I used to be before I ceased to believe in religion. But I'm nothing now."

"For shame, Maria!" repeated Mrs. Wylie; and Miss Skiddow's pale blue eyes grew like two china plates with horror. "And before a minister, too!" Mr. Mills' former reproof had been lost upon the farmer's wife. One

of the chief sources of her general strength and efficiency was that what others said never affected what she did.

The tactful man of God considered that it was time to return to Miss Skiddow's muttons. "Perhaps Miss Skiddow will tell us more particularly why the Russians interest her so much."

Delighted—like the rest of her sex—at an opportunity of talking about her feelings, the sentimental Annie replied: "Because they are so picturesque and romantic; I remember years ago being thrilled by reading the account of the present Emperor of Russia's coronation. It was all so splendid and symbolical. And the part that thrilled me the most was when the Empress kneeled down before him and he placed the crown on her head with his own hands. It seemed so wonderful for a woman to be crowned by the hand that she loved best in the whole world!"

In spite of herself Miss Bittern's dark eyes flashed with interest; but all she said was, "Very pretty for the Empress herself, no doubt, but of no account to the rest of the world that don't have such things happen to them."

"I only wish they did," sighed Miss Skiddow.

"Why, whatever use would they be if they did?" demanded Mrs. Wylie. "I never in all my life knew anybody talk as much nonsense as you do, Annie! I can't imagine Wylie putting a crown on my head, and it would be no pleasure to me even if he attempted such a thing. I should think he'd have gone off his own head, instead of on to mine. I really can't stand such foolishness, Annie, and I wonder you aren't ashamed to talk it—and before a minister, too!"

The wisdom of Mrs. Wylie completely crushed Miss Skiddow, and made her wish she had not spoken. But it

had an opposite effect upon Mr. Mills. He was one of those blessed few to whom the wisdom of this world is foolishness, and *vice versâ.*

"I agree with Miss Skiddow that it would indeed be glorious if such events happened to the rest of us," he said gently.

"But they don't," snapped Miss Bittern; "and that's the long and the short of it."

"Are you sure of that?" asked the minister; "I am not."

The three women looked at him in three different kinds of amazement. Miss Skiddow's was tinged with unfeigned delight, Miss Bittern's with a grudging interest, while Mrs. Wylie leaped to the conclusion that the hard work of his former circuit had affected the new minister's brain.

Miss Skiddow was the one to give expression to the universal surprise. "My goodness, Mr. Mills; what a beautiful idea! Though I don't quite see how you work it out."

"Naturally you don't," retorted Miss Bittern; "because it's all moonshine."

"Not at all, Maria," interposed Mrs. Wylie, who had been taught that the mentally afflicted should always be humoured rather than crossed. "I daresay it's quite a common affair in the busy circuits that Mr. Mills has come from, though I can't say it's often done in country places like this. But the ways of towns and country are so different, which nobody understands as hasn't been there, and that's why it so unsettles servants who have always lived in the country even to visit a town; though why they prefer town situations to country ones I never can make out, unless it's the picture palaces."

"How do you work it out, Mr. Mills?" persisted Miss Skiddow.

"Quite simply," replied the minister. "Are we not told that if we are faithful unto death we shall each receive a crown of life from the Hands of the One Who loves us best of all—from the Hands that were pierced for our sakes?"

"Oh, what a beautiful idea!" repeated Miss Skiddow.

Miss Bittern gave a harsh laugh as she rose from her seat to depart. "Well, there won't be any crown for me anyway, for I shan't be faithful unto death. I've no faith left now, and there will be still less by the time I come to die."

"Don't speak like that, Maria, for fear the Lord should take you at your word," said Mrs. Wylie, also rising to speed the parting guest. "It's shocking to hear you, and especially before a minister!"

But Maria was not to be subdued. "Minister or no minister, I shall say what I think, and folks must just take me as I am or leave me."

"I don't know what Mr. Mills will think of you," continued Mrs. Wylie in distress, feeling that for a minister of religion to be thus spoken of under her roof in some way convicted her of inhospitality if not of actual sacrilege.

"I'm sure I don't know, and, what's more, I don't care," retorted Maria with her bitter laugh; and with scanty adieux to her fellow-guests she bounced out of the room and out of the house.

"That poor soul has suffered much," remarked the minister, who thought more of people's minds than of their manners. "Tell me about her."

"She was jilted on her wedding-day," began Miss Skiddow.

"So she was," interrupted the hostess; "but I don't see that that has given her any right to be rude to a new minister under my roof: not any right whatsoever."

"Perhaps if we had suffered as she has suffered we should be as she is," suggested Mr. Mills in his Christian charity.

But Mrs. Wylie repudiated his suggestion. "Not we! I'm sure if Wylie had jilted me on my wedding-day, I shouldn't have taken it as an excuse for insulting ministers of religion in other people's houses, nor felt it gave me any right to do such a thing. And as for suffering—why, them as marries suffer as much as them as doesn't. Often more. Many's the time that Wylie has put me out far more than if he'd jilted me on my wedding-day—in fact, there's been times when I've wished that he had, and I'd have felt it a kindness on his part, men being what they are, and particularly aggravating as husbands; but you don't catch me flying at everybody's throat because he didn't, or insulting a new preacher to his face. I take it that it's the duty of a Christian woman to bear the burden that the Lord has seen fit to lay on her shoulders, whether that burden takes the form of being jilted on her wedding-day or married on it; and only the Lord knows which burden is the hardest to bear."

"Still she was dressed for her wedding and actually at the chapel for it," remarked Miss Skiddow, in charitable excuse for poor Maria's bitterness: "in a white cashmere dress, and a wreath of real white roses and orange-blossom."

"And I was at the chapel ready dressed in my wedding-dress to be married to Wylie thirty years ago, and was actually married to him, and have had to put up with his

tantrums ever since, men being what they are, and the best of husbands being but a doubtful blessing; yet you don't find me snapping off everybody else's head, and insulting new ministers to their very faces!"

But Miss Skiddow went on as if her hostess had not spoken: "And after she'd waited at the chapel for nearly an hour, and they found that her young man had run off with his landlady's daughter, who was much prettier than she was, though not as intelligent, poor Maria went back home and took off her wedding-dress and wreath and put them in a box and locked them up, and has never looked at them since, though it's close on thirty years ago. And it turned her that bitter that there's no getting on with her at all, though I was always fond of Maria and always shall be."

"And don't forget to add," said Mrs Wylie, "that her young man took to beating his wife before he'd been married a twelvemonth."

"Still it must be distressing to be jilted on one's wedding day," urged the gentle Annie.

"It may be more distressing to be married on it," retorted Mrs. Wylie; "and it would have been in Maria's case. If she'd any sense in her head she'd go down on her knees and thank the Lord for that jilting business. Why, if she'd have married him he'd have beaten her like he did the other."

But Miss Skiddow held her ground. "She thinks that if he'd married her he wouldn't have beaten her."

"Well then, Annie, I can tell her that he would. If men are given to beating their wives, the sort of wife doesn't make any difference to them. You can take my word for that."

But Miss Skiddow wasn't going to take Mrs. Wylie's word for anything so problematical. "You never can tell. You know what people do, things being what they are, but you never can tell what they'd have done if things had been different."

This conversation made a great impression upon Mr. Mills. He saw—as none of her other friends did—the true inwardness of Maria's sorrow: and he realised the original depths and sweetness of a nature upon which a disappointment could have had such a blighting effect. Only true sweetness could have turned so sour: only great warmth could have been so thoroughly chilled. A slighter nature would have been more slightly affected: a weaker character would have been temporarily bent, rather than permanently crushed. And because he comprehended, he pardoned. Maria's sharp speeches flew by him unheeded and unanswered.

All that autumn Mr. Mills set himself to thaw the ice of Maria's nature, and to induce the spring of love and tenderness in her sore heart to flow once again. He sought her out, and held long conversations with her; endeavouring to prove to her that—in spite of her conviction to the contrary—God still loved and cared for her. To a certain extent Maria responded to his advances, she revealed to him the hidden beauties of her mind and character, and talked to him freely and often brilliantly upon many subjects which interested them both. But on one point she was as adamant. She refused to believe that, since Man had slighted her, God was still waiting and longing for her to return to Him. Her self-confidence had received a blow from which it seemed unable to recover. Mr. Mills succeeded at last in curing her of the bitterness which her

sorrow had engendered; but he was incapable of raising her from the depths of her humiliation. She believed that she was despised alike by God and Man; and no argument that the minister could urge could shake her in this conviction. The man who cruelly jilted her had slain at one blow her love and her romance and her happiness; but he had done her a greater evil even than these: he had destroyed her self-respect. She no longer felt herself of any value either to herself or to others. And the man who does this to a woman deals her "the most unkindest cut of all": for there is a spark of innocent vanity kindled in the heart of every woman as soon as she is loved; and when that spark is extinguished, the glory of her womanhood is gone. A woman bereft of any saving spark of vanity may be a drudge or a slave or a rebel: but she is no longer a woman.

"Annie Skiddow doesn't think I understand all her beautiful and romantic ideas," Maria confided to the minister one afternoon when he had overtaken her on her way home from Windygate and was walking back with her: "yet I do—far better than she does herself. But I daren't let myself think about them, they make me so miserable."

Mr. Mills nodded. "I know."

"When she was talking that day about the Empress of Russia's coronation, and of how beautiful it was for the hand that loved her to put the crown upon her head, I knew exactly what she meant; but it made me mad to feel that there were such beautiful things in the world and I was cut out from every one of them. Of course I didn't expect to be an empress and have a golden crown like that: I'm not such a fool; but I felt that that was only a symbol

of what happens to every happily married woman. The hand of the man she has chosen to be her king crowns her with the crown of wifehood. And it turned all my heart to gall to know that I wasn't considered worthy even of an honour that falls to so many women, simply because I wasn't what men call pretty!"

"There are fairer crowns than even the crown of wifehood," said Mr. Mills gently. "After all, it is only man-given; but the crown of life is God-given. To my mind there is something very beautiful in the Roman Catholic idea that the woman who gives herself to the work of the Church instead of to domestic happiness is the bride of Christ. I think it is only an enlargement of St. Paul's idea that the married woman cares for the things that please her husband, but the unmarried woman cares for those that please the Lord."

Miss Bittern was silent for a moment. Then she said: "If that were true, then the old maid would have as beautiful a lot as the married woman?"

"Quite so: some would say even more beautiful. I think I should say so myself. Provided, of course, that the unmarried woman cared for the things that concern the Lord as much as the married woman cares for the things that concern her husband. Given two frivolous and selfish and worldly women—one married and one single—I should say that the single one will be worse than the married one, marriage of necessity inducing a certain amount of give-and-take and a certain truth with realities. But of two truly religious women—one married and one single—I should say that the single one would have the better chance of making the greater saint, for the reason which St. Paul mentions."

Maria's usually hard face softened. "It seems a wonderfully beautiful idea that any woman could be the bride of Christ," she murmured, her strict Protestant training never having allowed her to hear the phrase before. But the new minister was superior to conventions—even Protestant ones.

"So beautiful," he said, "that I regret the reformed Churches haven't adopted it. But I do not agree with the Roman idea that to earn this title a woman must retire into a nunnery for the rest of her mortal life. I hold that every unmarried woman who fulfils St. Paul's ideal and cares only for the things which concern the Lord—in short, who loves and serves her Lord as the married woman loves and serves her husband—is entitled to be called the bride of Christ."

For a minute the new idea flooded Maria's face with joy. Then the habit of years reasserted itself, and the joy faded. "It's a beautiful notion for those who are good enough for it, but not for such as me."

The minister's eyes were filled with an infinite pity. "Why not?" he asked.

Maria turned her head away so that he should not see the trembling of her lips. "If I wasn't counted worthy to be a man's bride, I'm surely not worthy to be the bride of Christ."

The minister walked on by her side in silence. Then he suddenly said: "And why weren't you considered worthy to be a man's bride, Miss Bittern? You are clever and capable and generous and warm-hearted. What more has any man a right to ask for in a wife?"

"I wasn't pretty, you see, and the girl he set before me was."

"But what has that to do with the present question? The Lord looketh not on the outward appearance, you know, but on the heart; and I know you have a large and loving heart to give Him."

"It's too late now. I'm old and ugly and stupid, and no good for anything. I used to have youth and brains even if I hadn't looks; but I've lost even them now."

In vain the minister argued: poor Miss Bittern's self-abasement refused to be comforted. But at last she cried, as many have cried before her: "If only the Lord would give me a sign that He wanted me and my love, then I could give myself to Him. But as it is, I can't believe that He has any use for a stupid, ugly old woman like me!"

"Perhaps He will give you a sign if we ask Him, and if it is in accordance with His Divine Will to do so. But if you venture to ask Him for this, you must put away all trace of bitterness out of your own heart. If He deigns to meet you, you must be ready to meet Him. Have you forgiven the man who was to have been your husband?"

"Yes; years ago."

"And the woman whom he chose in your place?"

"Yes."

"And is there nothing left to keep alive the memory of that old wrong?"

Miss Bittern hesitated a moment; then she said: "There's only one thing left. There's my wedding-dress and wreath which I put away in a box on the day that was to have been my wedding-day and have never looked at since."

"Then you must take them out of their box, and either destroy them or make some use of them. As long as you keep them shut up, you are keeping shut up with them some

of the anger and bitterness of that old, unhappy time ; and as long as there is any bitterness in your heart or in your home you cannot be in perfect harmony with Christ."

By that time they were nearing Miss Bittern's home. "If you will come home with me," she said after a moment's silence, "I will open that box right now, and put away all that old misery for ever. But even then I cannot believe that Christ will want the love and the service of such an ugly, stupid old maid as I am. Oh, if He would only give me a sign that He accepts my service and my love!"

"We will ask Him," replied the minister gently, as Miss Bittern opened the door of her small house, and ushered him into the parlour.

"Let us pray," he said, kneeling down; and Miss Bittern knelt down beside him. Then he went on: "Blessed Lord, Who knowest our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking: may it please Thee to grant to this Thy servant a sign that Thou wilt accept her as Thine own, and wilt grant her grace to share Thy Crown of Thorns on earth, and Thy Crown of Glory in heaven, so that she may evermore be one with Thee, both in this life and in the life to come. We ask it for Thy Name's sake. Amen."

"Now let us ratify the covenant you are ready to make with God," said the minister rising from his knees, "and leave Him to ratify His with you. And as an earthly bride forgets her own people and her father's house in the new life to which she is giving herself, so the bride of Christ puts away the old things so that all things may become new."

In silence Maria led the way into a small unfurnished room in the middle of which stood a locked trunk; and in silence she knelt down and opened it. First she took out a

cashmere dress, that had once been white but now was yellow with age, and laid it on the floor; then she took out white shoes and stockings and gloves, and laid them beside it, and then a tulle veil, falling into holes as she handled it. The minister thought that this was all; but there was still one other thing in the old trunk. And as Miss Bittern lifted up the remains of what had once been her wedding-wreath of white roses and orange-blossom, she and the minister saw that what she was holding in her hand was a Crown of Thorns.

And that was the story of Miss Bittern's conversion, or—as Mr. Mills would put it—of Miss Bittern's coronation.

Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler

FINE FEATHERS

BY

CHARLES E. BROCK, R.I.

Fine Feathers

THE COPPER MYSTERY.

By Eden Phillpotts.

We've had a terrible come-along-of-it to Daleham, I do assure you, and of all strange happenings begot of this misbegotten war the copper mystery was the strangest. Of course, we'd had our scares and frights, like bigger places; but among the proper curious things that have happened the mystery about the copper was out and away the queerest.

Because with the spy stories and such like, time generally proves they'm all nonsense at bottom, and most of 'em be just another example of how you've only got to start a lie for it to take wings on its own; but with our copper mystery there was a fact staring you in the face. It wasn't what somebody had told somebody else, but what we found out for ourselves all round, to our own cost and loss.

Mrs. Baskervell was the first to suffer, and she went into Mrs. Forbes to have a dish of tea and told how she'd lost her copper candlesticks. Mrs. Baskervell's front door opens into the kitchen, you must know, for 'tis rather a poor house she've got, and from the door you could see her copper candlesticks on the mantel-shelf. They were the joy of her life—so she said after they'd gone. But go they did—clean vanished one fine day and naught to show for it. And the very evening after she'd told Mrs. Forbes the sad tale, if Mrs. Forbes herself didn't lose her warming-pan!

She ran out at dusk to post a letter to her son at the front, and she weren't away twenty minutes, but when she got back the warming-pan had gone for ever. Some unknown rogue had marked her go out and popped in the minute her back was turned. Then old Masterman lost a bowl that he'd fetched all the way from India, when he was a sailor man, and 'twas all worked by hand and was worth money. And then I had my turn, and a bad turn too. Sarah Blades had just been in with her little boy, Harold—him as sings in the choir—and she'd told me how the baggering thief had took her coal-scuttle: a gert thing, big enough to hold a quarter of a hundredweight. Yet he'd took it—from under her nose seemingly, though how the mischief he could have done such a deed unseen none knew. Cunning as a sarpent the creature clearly was. And I walked down the road with Sarah after she'd told me, and when I came back, if my little copper figure of Moses in the bulrushes weren't gone! And my daughter only one room off all the time. She was a bed-lier with a crooked back and as quiet as a mouse at all times; and yet the wicked robber had come and gone with my beautiful baby Moses—a treasure left to me when my Uncle Nathan died, and far ways the best heirloom I'd got. Then two days later a copper vase went off the counter at Mary Mayne's knick-knack shop, and the rogue actually paid another visit to Sarah Blades and lifted her copper kettle! And what she said about the police I can't write down.

By this time Daleham was in a proper upstore I warn 'e. For it weren't so much the value of the things, but the deadly certainty as we'd got a bowldacious German spy in our midst helping himself right and left to the very stuff Germany wanted most.

There was a lot of feeling about, and though the only German to our knowledge in our midst was an old sand-blind man named Tann, as had been in Daleham fifty years and didn't remember a word of his own language, yet the people wouldn't go to his tobacco shop no more and wanted to have the ancient creature interned. Because, they said, "Once a German, always a German," and they reckoned you can't get their "culture" out of they awful people, no more than you can get spots off a leopard. And they said though 'twas a very sure thing Tann wasn't stealing our copper, yet for sure he'd got a rascal hid in his house who was.

Then came the amazing light on the mystery, and it shows how a spirit to serve his country by hook or by crook be just as common a thing in a English human boy as a German one; for if you'll believe me 'twas one of our own native sons, and him not up home twelve year old, as had been stealing the copper! And all for England he done it, because the ridiculous toad knew Germany was properly spoiling for copper, and he thought, no doubt, his own country was in the same fix. And hearing tell as the German school-children were invited to bring copper to their schoolmasters, and praised for so doing, the rash young blid set out on his wicked career; and when he was caught, all he said was that he was doing his duty and 'twas a proper scandal that all the rest of us weren't doing ours.

Bob Blades made the discovery.

You see his son Harold kept rabbits down at the bottom of the garden in a bit of a outhouse, and the child always locked 'em in most careful and kept the key most careful. Well, missing a rake he wanted for his work, Bob judged it was in the shed along with his boy's rabbits, but

Harold was to school, so, being an impatient man, Blades kicked in the door. And half a minute after he barked his shins on his own copper coal-scuttle!

He fetched a candle, then called his missus, and in five minutes they stood aghast afore Master Harold's hoard. There was all the things he'd lifted—thirty-two pieces of copper, all sorts and all sizes.

Sarah, she burst into tears, and doubted not that her boy would be hanged at the least, but Bob kept his nerve and bade her shut her mouth, and doubted not that 'twas for England, not Germany, his whelp had done it. And so it proved, and when Harold came home and found out his secret place had been broke open, he told 'em his views, so calm as you please, and weren't down-daunted about it neither, but said he'd do it again the first chance. He even dared to tell his father 'twas his duty to knock up a box and send the things to London to the War Office! And even after his father had give him the thrashing of his life he didn't move a muscle. In fact, the mistaken little wretch only broke down when it was explained to him that England had all the copper she wanted and a bit over, and that 'twas Germany, not us, that was hard up. After hearing that he was sorry and wept bitter tears. But he never felt no pang of conscience about it even then, and the only thing he feared was they'd turn him out of the Boy Scouts.

He took the future into his own hands, being that sort of boy, and he went along to every house he'd robbed and took each man and woman their copper back. And some forgave him, hearing the story and seeing he'd meant well for England; but some did not, and 'twas all we could do to keep old Masterman having the law of him. However, afore the old man made up his mind, to the great joy of

Harold Blades, he was took on for a bugler in the Fifth Devons, for he had a rare gift for music and had larned the instrument to perfection along with the Boy Scouts. And it shows, if that wanted showing, that though we always reckon the female character is the most tricky and difficult to know, the human boy be every bit as much of a puzzle in his way. You never can tell what the little devils have got in their minds, and, along of being so young and inexperienced, it often happens that the very best of 'em will properly flummox you by doing damn disgraceful things with the most high-minded intentions. But what I say is, seeing how mighty difficult us grown-ups often find it to know right from wrong, we must never be too hard on young creatures when they make their little mistakes in the same direction.

Eden Phillpotts

BELGIUM

BY

W. H. Caffyn

BELGIUM

ABS AND HIS WIFE.

By J. E. Patterson.

Abs sat in an old "Windsor" armchair. Desolation was in his heart, and an expression of hell was on his face. His grey eyes, searching and fairly large and quiet in their movements generally, were intently watching the big fire of sea-coal and wrecked ships' timbers. He was smoking a clay pipe, every puff from which was cut off sharply by the way his short-haired lips came together, with a slightly inward turn at the firm pressure of each other. The south-easterly gale that roared without and drew big, leaping flames into the black mouth of the high, wide chimney, was utterly unheeded by Abs—who rarely heard his full name, Absalom.

In the cove below, where every boat had long been hauled beyond the reach of the boiling surf, and amongst the blackish, gigantic, fang-like rocks of the headland, great seas might roar and snarl and hiss their savagery into the darkness of the night; yet the man who, without ever a boast or the company of his kind, had not missed being out in any such heavy weather for twenty odd years, watching coast-line and offing that he might give succour wherever the Almighty put it into his hands to give, and benefiting himself as often as lifeless wreckage came within his reach, —this man now sat and smoked and looked at the fire, in a silence that was broken only by the regular purring of the kitten on his legs, the sharp, occasional crackling of the

wood in the grate, and the intermittent whistle and moan of the breeze as its fury rose and fell around the cottage.

Had he not, but little more than half an hour ago, come indoors out of that welter of wind and sea for "a bite an' sup," some dry clothing and a fresh supply of matches and tobacco, after having been out since noonday, and five hours of it in the bitter darkness of that winter's night? His fellows of the cove-hamlet had, since nightfall, drunk their ale and yarned in the comfort of The Mariner's Compass, in the little half-street fronting the beach; or had sat in their own homes, listening to the raging elements, mending odds and ends of gear indoors, and ready for a call to anything that happened out of doors. And why should they do otherwise? Were not the men of Holmsted on the one side and of Sandy Bay on the other, with their lifeboats and rocket-apparatus, always on the look-out at such times? As for them and the cove and thereabouts generally, was not Abs—"Good Abs" to some of them, "Never-miss" to the more critical few—was not he on the prowl, and would let them know if he wanted them at anything? It was not for them to know that Abs had slipped back, from along by the western headland, to freshen himself up a little before Elsie, his young wife, went to bed; or that he had found a brief note, scrawled by her and left pinned to the faded table-cloth right in the lamplight. That note now lay close to where he had found it. Its unintended brutal brevity was:—

"DEAR ABS,

Bill and me are going away together. I can't stand this life no longer; it's driving me fair crazy. I shouldn't have married you; it was wicked. My heart's

crying all the time for something more than I've got here. God forgive me and comfort you.

"ELSIE."

After Abs had spelt the words in a low, audible tone, his fingers opened mechanically, letting the missive fall to the table again. Then he, beginning to grasp the full purport of the letter, had once more picked it up in the same quiet manner; had still more carefully gone over the big, angular letters, dropped the note a second time, filled his pipe and sat down. Then the kitten had crept from an inside corner of the high, bright steel fender, tried to climb up his smooth, wet sea-boots, and had been lifted on to his knees. Now it stirred from its light sleep and began to play with a loose thread in his guernsey. Presently it drew Abs' attention. He looked down at it a little while, puffing steadily at his pipe all the time; then said he:

"Aye, Kitty, it be you an' me now for it, little 'un. Didn't think as she could a left you, so mighty fond as she was to see your antics. Now we got it all to ourselves, you (a big, involuntary sigh half-choked him) an' me. . . . Poor little thing, nob'dy to give it milk two 'r three times a day. I'll have to come in an' tend to him a bit. On'y him an' me for it now." Another great sigh arose in his throat, and was instantly followed by a greater sob that made the kitten stop in its play to look up at his face. This utter loneliness, which had come down on him like a thunder-clap, was too much for even his strongly reserved nature. Other sobs were suppressed to some extent. His pipe fell on the fender, was smashed, and the pieces were left un-heeded. The respect and the fear of his neighbours; the wild storm and lives in probable jeopardy close at hand; his shortcomings as a husband—mostly a lack of demonstration,

of appreciation in word and deed; his narrow uprightness; and all the things of the past were alike forgotten in his crushing desolation of the moment.

He arose and put the kitten down, where he saw the tiny paper-ball that Elsie had made for it to play with. But it came back to his feet. The repressed feeling of a score years was making his heart like a stout bag at bursting point. In a way, penitently he thought of the complaint he had made to Elsie at noon. After stroking the animal he gave it some milk. He looked around the room, and a sense of comfort struck him as it had not done till now. He noted (as he had *silently* done in the past) how Elsie had kept everything "spick an' span." He saw, too, in a more vague way, how the deft fingers and finer taste of a woman had put a touch of beauty here, of attractive homeliness there, of tidiness over all, giving to the whole room a soothing suggestion of femininity such as it had never possessed whilst Mrs. Corton (the wife of a neighbour) had "looked after the house and that" for him. Here his loneliness surged back with renewed vigour. In the midst of it his gaze casually met a reminder of Bill—an old pipe on the window-ledge, where the latter had been accustomed to sit and read in the day-time—this Bill whose life he had saved a few weeks ago. Uttering the first curse that had come to his lips for many a year, Abs placed the kitten on the hearth-rug, thundered heavily into the scullery, then out to the raging weather and the blackness. The outer door was banged at his heels. He thrust his arms into the oilskin coat as he stumbled along, and felt worse than he did when he killed Seth Jenks in his own defence twenty-two years ago, when he swore an oath never again to fight for himself.

* * * * * *

When Bill put the question to her—Would she go away with him?—Elsie, giving way suddenly to her long-pent-up flood of feeling, had flung respectability to the howling wind, slipped into a heavy black jacket, put on a hat, and gone. Immediately on their leaving the cottage Elsie struck into a side-path that skirted the high land above the head of the cove and crossed the main road leading from Holmsted into the hamlet. Not a word was said. She had not been the tempter, had not flaunted before him either her mute misery, the narrows which hemmed her in, or any allurement of lip or eye or gesture; no more had he thrown actual blandishments at her. Their mutual understanding was mainly one of accepted inference, the beginning of which had been his casual remark that life seemed to be pretty dull to the inhabitants of Bender Cove. Never had there been a protracted conversation between them on any part of the subject, as it so deeply affected her, only a flashing comment here and there, an answer, a sympathy of understanding, and the matter had gone untouched for hours afterwards, sometimes for days. Others in the same circumstances would have found Abs a fruitful topic; not so with them; only twice had a shortcoming of his been mentioned. Wondering how such a man had become possessed of so young and fine-looking a wife, Bill had found himself stirring to her physical attractions; this was immediately after he understood the situation. But instinct told him that Elsie was no woman for an intrigue under her husband's roof—not even if that husband was as bad as Abs was good, but narrow and wordless. To her Bill was cheerful without foolery; he had a few words of appreciation for things done, was quick to see a point and say a word or not as might be needed, but less warmth in his glances

at such times would have been more to Abs. Bill was good to look at, appeared to be clean in his living, and of an age that was natural to her own. Further than this there had been no opportunity, no need for her to examine. Superficially he was clear-eyed generally, a genial fire compared to the austere Abs, and was strong with the strength of common-sense.

Had he asked Elsie if she loved him, her reply would have been a quiet, truthful and conclusive "No." In that starved heart of hers she admired him, seeing him daily at his best. Inevitably he stood up as a contrast to Abs, and the husband was eclipsed in the reflection. But, caught in an hour of rebellion that was hard to keep under—owing to that unusual complaint of Abs, when he was in the house at noontime—and in a moment of warm sympathy being applied to a loneliness that cried out in its suppression, Elsie had said "Yes" to the invitation, and was out of the house ere ten minutes had passed, leading the way because he did not know it, and now feeling, curiously, that she was the stronger of the two and must be the guide as much for that as for local reasons. Thus they kept along, buffeted by the gale, hampered by the darkness, and bumping their shoulders together when he tried to gain a position at her side; on which occasions Elsie said quietly, "You'd better follow on," and maintained her pace, which was as steady and as evenly progressive as any man in the hamlet could have sustained in the same circumstances.

Her intended destination at the time was Sandy Bay, the future to be decided on afterwards. To have gone to Holmsted or to Shorthaven would have been too foolish for several reasons. But at the forked paths east of the cove she made the mistake of taking the right-hand one—

the one that led curvingly towards the bluff. Here the way was broader, leveller, and they could walk side by side. So on through the darkness and the bitter night they went, a fitting pair to the eye that looked no further, both strong, both stalwart and seemingly of the same make temperamentally. Little was being said, little indeed, and that was mainly spoken by him, more for the sake of saying something than anything else ; her share was merely the making of short answers, mostly monosyllabic. Even what he said was not what was really occupying his thoughts. Elsie filled his mind, making him intermittently hug close to her with a sort of cub-like, half-apologetic, half-commanding fondness, which he blamed, in an unbelieving kind of way to the unevenness of the path. It was life's inevitable comedy breaking through its more persistent tragedy ; but they were too full of other things to allow of their seeing the intrusion.

Meanwhile, Elsie was thinking entirely of what she had left, back there in the humdrum little community, with nothing to break the dull stagnancy of its life except an occasional wreck, or a birth or death amongst the cove-dwellers; for marriages did not happen there. The young women went to domestic service or other work in towns like Holmsted, and there became wives, and the young men married and remained away or brought wives home with them. But of its quiet cleanliness in life—who so warped in mind as not to do it justice there ? Elsie's soul was like the adjacent coast on which those incessant seas, at the behest of the gale, thundered and snarled and broke over in smotherings of white foam, a suspicion of which reached and spread this rough table-land where they were footing it hardly, wind-swept and chilled.

The mental breakers under which Elsie's soul was

suffering, silently and with increasing pain, were Abs and his qualities as a husband; the justice he gave to all acts and things; the quiet uniformity of his doings; the kitten —would he feed it and care for it?—Yes, because he could not be other than just; would he be lonely? Would he miss her much? Here she was at fault. The general placidity of their lives together, combined with some lack of penetration and deduction on her part, had not given her even an inkling of that deep well of feeling which Abs had kept so carefully covered up ever since his young days—a secreting which was more due to the fact that in all the intervening years there had been no occasion to stir the well, rather than to his desire to keep it hidden. Those words of his to the kitten, his fondling it, and his sobs would have been a long day's revelation to Elsie. She was now thinking, in a vague kind of manner, of the rough nobility and dignity of the life left there on the brow of the sloping cliff; of her inability to go back to its clean though narrow monotony; of what would be said of her in the little place, where such an act as this of hers had not happened before, so far as anyone could recollect.

This was the point that struck Elsie as she thought how meanly she was playing her part towards Abs—the man who had striven hard for her night and day, had always been just to her—and of how he might miss her. She had involuntarily jerked one hand to her heart, as though the pain was physical. Here was a breaker that shook her soul to its foundations. For about a fortnight she had hugged her hungering heart to herself, thinking of how much happier she would have been as the wife of Bill, and in a sense wishing that the two men would change places, even to seeing briefly the possibility of what had now come about.

Yet one phase of the matter had passed her by: What would be said of her by the wives of the cove? Gossiping, sometimes quarrelling, occasionally backbiting women as they were, it was still their pride to be good mothers and true wives, each one of whom would rather have lost her right hand and continued to bear her burdens than have done as Elsie was doing now. Elsie became oblivious to the bitterness of the weather and heedless of where her steps were carrying her.

In the midst of this abstraction of hers, Bill's foot struck an obstacle in the path, and he stumbled gently against Elsie. At the same time he put an arm around her waist, and made to pull her to him. But she thrust him resolutely away, making him surprised both at her action and her physical strength, she saying, "No, no! For God's sake let me alone yet a bit!"

* * * * * *

It was not back towards the headland that divided Bender Cove from Holmsted, to the deafening coast-line, where the air was full of fine spume, and the hissing surf and breaking rollers lent a greyish sort of light to the immediate darkness, that Abs went. For the first time in his life on such an occasion he passed neighbour Corton's cottage and trod heavily down the steep, winding, short road that led into the cove. A foul taste was in his mouth, and the great desolation had given way to an anger that was as great. "Bill"—the name was as poison; to Abs there was something vitriolic in its sound. And he so blind as he had been these two weeks! He was not blaming Elsie; but by the Almighty if——. The latch of the inn door fell under his thumb and he almost stumbled down the

single step that led inward—to find himself briefly confused by the light, the babble of tongues, the unhealthy warmth and an atmosphere which was thick with the fumes of ale and tobacco.

In an instant the general talk became a greater hubbub at the appearance of Abs. Did he want anyone or anything? What was the matter? What had happened? Was there something aground on the Scar? or what was it? These and similar questions were all fired higgledy-piggledy at Abs. It was so strange a sight to see him blundering in there at such a time, unless he happened to be in need of them all; and even then it was a wonder that he had not found a messenger to send for them, as usual, while he hurried back to the scene of the wreck or the launching of a boat. But Abs made no answer to any man, which was stranger still. He just shut the heavy, black door (whereto age had given an inward lean at the top), barring the foul night without. Then he made a sort of dissenting motion with his hand, as he passed along to the two-feet-square wicket and asked the landlord for a pint of ale. Surely this was past all understanding and more than enough to cause the sudden quietude. It was a night that would be forgotten by no man present—a night that was to be counted as a landmark in time by which that generation would locate other happenings of less importance.

Abs took his pint of ale and sat down. Sheer amazement kept his companions silent for some minutes. Then general conversation was slowly resumed. Presently big Joe Brown (who was rather more "chummy" with Abs than the others were) said:

"W'ere's Bill, mate? Strikes me as he oughter be

out wi' you to-night, if any man did." Abs smoked in silence; even his expression showed nothing of what he felt. To leave a question unanswered neither admitted nor denied it in that company. Another man, a little further away, muttered something about Bill "loafin'" his time away," and Brown added, "Yes, an not a month sin' Abs dragged him be the heels out o' the suck of that schooner. Looks as if that narrow squeak's fair filled his chest chock-a-block o' goin' to sea. Eh, mate?" he queried to Abs.

"Mebbe," the latter replied, lifting his pint mug from the table. With that swig he finished the ale. Then he arose and made for the door, buttoning his coat and smoking as he went, but saying not a word. If Abs could have heard only a few of the many remarks which followed his disappearance they might have aroused him a little from the depth of his trouble. Every man present was firmly convinced that something had "gone mighty wrong wi' Abs sin' noontime." Some of them said there was madness and murder and other evil things in his eyes; two or three of the elders thought that he "'peared to be worse 'an ever he was in them wild days, w'en he used to tramp over to Holmsted to seek a fight." Then Brown suddenly and resolutely left his seat, saying:

"That's so, an' here goes one as is a-goin' to see what's in it all."

In the meantime Abs had passed through the straggling little street, crossed the sharp head of the cove and was winding his way up the opposite declivity, in the direction of Sandy Bay—or, it might be, with the intention of going towards the bluff that formed the north-eastern seaward defence of the cove, a spot which he usually visited in the course of such a night, the times of his going being dependent

on the weight and force of the gale. On these occasions his pace was always fairly slow and easy; now it was slow and heedless apparently. He still smoked his big-bowled pipe, but seemed not to know or to care whither he went or what he did.

On his way past the cottages in the hamlet Abs had seen, here and there where a blind was up or a door chanced to be opened as he went by, things which had thrust his loneliness back upon him. The homely comforts; the filial and fraternal affection; the neighbourliness of "peepin' in for a yarn"; the cheeriness of such company generally—all these features had combined in thrusting him back, in a sense, on to the barrenness of his own fireside. And, in that quiet way which satisfied him so completely, he had been as happy as ever a man need to be. Elsie was a fine sort of a woman, he remembered, well-set-up and with a pleasant face the like of which was not to be met in every ten miles of the coast. Two years and a half ago he had felt much silent pride in bringing her home as his wife from Shorthaven, where it was never understood why she had not married one of the young men around her there. And she—quiet in her ways, like himself—had seemed to be happy enough.

All this was passing through his mind, but in more detail, as he climbed up the steep way in that bitter darkness and in the teeth of the gale; the bowl of his pipe being now in one hand then in the other, in part to keep them warm and in part to prevent the wind from blowing the hot ashes in his face. They had never had "words," he reflected. Her particular wants had been few, and he had crossed her in none of them. What, then, did she mean by writing that she could stand the life no longer? What was there

in it to drive her crazy? These two points puzzled him. Many a time he had told himself, but only himself, that he had the best wife in Bender Cove—best to look at and least to complain about.

Then Bill had come (dragged by Abs from certain death in the wreck of the schooner of which he had been mate), he the only survivor, tall and well-knit, the same as Elsie. And Abs had carried him up home, rubbed some life into him, and put him into dry clothes; then had left him for Elsie to attend to with hot food. So Abs had gone out again into the night—wild as this one—with his life in his hands, and his face in the direction of this self-appointed duty, taking to himself neither honour, pride, nor ever a word of such talk as most men would have considered to be their modest right now and then on the matter. Nor had he ever seen that in and about and through it all, with all its nobility of sacrifice and humanity, there was a narrowness that made for suppression which was hardly human and for the general dislike of his fellows—a narrowness that, to the majority of them, tended largely to obliterate all its accompanying qualities.

Abs was now thinking of that night, of his leaving Bill to Elsie's ministrations; then his thoughts went from one to another of the former's subsequent actions (it did not occur to him that his wife might have a share in the guilt); of how Bill first began to hang about the house, outside but near by more than indoors; of his beginning to show in his talk that he thought of taking up long-shore work instead of going to sea; then of how the man had regularly accompanied him from the house to the beach, in the morning, afternoon and early night, doing odd jobs for him, but always drifting back sooner or later to the house, and being

found there by Abs, sitting and reading near the window, when he returned to a meal, while Elsie was silently going about her work and seeming to have no interest in life beyond her household duties. But, still, she had never been one of many words; and during the past eighteen months or so it had become less and less her habit to talk, except on matters that had to be discussed, and even then at no greater length than necessity demanded.

Abs did not now feel the bitterness of the night, nor was he heeding the blackness of it. Every foot of the narrow way was familiar ground to his feet, and whilst they trod it mechanically, his mind was hard at work to find something in the shape of buoys marking the channel along which Elsie and Bill had come to these devil's straits in which they and he now were. That crushing loneliness was again giving way to an anger which was terrible even in its repression. Thus he plodded on till he stood on the heights above Sandy Bay, saw that all was well down there, then turned about to reach the headland and follow the coast back to the cove. When he was about half-way to the bluff he came upon the ruins of the old fort and found a shelter under the inside of the biggest piece of wall, for he felt tired and a little sick of battling against the bitter cold and the darkness.

* * * * * *

Not till Elsie began to realise rather than to hear the dull roar of the big seas around the foot of the headland did she get a glimmering that for nearly an hour she and Bill had toiled along the wrong path. Then she stopped, listened, and confided her fears to him. He hearkened also and came to the conclusion that the wild sea was not much further ahead,

neither was it far away on their left. At this she explained the situation to him, saying that they must cross the waste land till they found the cliff-path to Sandy Bay. Ten minutes later they were in the path, and he resumed his interrupted efforts to break through her puzzling silence and her too evident desire to keep him at arm's length. Finding this of no avail, and beginning to feel that the fruit was losing some of its anticipated sweetness, he took to talking of Abs—of his narrow goodness, his lack of warmth and other defects as a husband; to all of which she gave brief replies. It was not a subject to her liking; but she could not deny the truth.

Thus it was that they drew near the ruined fort, and the wind carried a sense of their words to Abs. At the first remarks, which were indistinct yet arrestingly familiar in their tone, he merely pricked up his ears and became alert mentally. Then clearly came Bill's urging to Elsie to shelter a while amongst the ruins; she was refusing, but her words were too low to reach Abs. Yet Bill incited . . . And they drew nearer and seemed to stop. . . . They had turned an angle in the wall, thereby finding a sudden shelter, the comfort of which had somewhat pulled Elsie up almost unknown to her; she leaned momentarily against the broken masonry, as her companion finished the remark he was then making—an inferential sort of accusation as to Abs being too much of a "goody-goody glum 'un" to suit a woman of her kind. Elsie's answer was a vague conditional acceptance of his meaning, but the only word in it that reached her husband's ears was "Mebbe." This, however, was enough encouragement for Bill to pursue the subject; meanwhile Elsie replied quietly, as best she could. She felt that it was not for her to substantiate charges against a husband who, for

all his shortcomings, had behaved better to her than she had to him. And Abs now first became broadeningly aware of certain personal truths which he had so far missed, but was to miss no more.

Presently Bill resumed those attentions which she had already put off repeatedly, on one pretence or another. But here, halted out of the cold, raging wind, her excuses would have to be so much more limited that she at once resumed the journey, saying, with quiet firmness :

" Let's get down to Sandy Bay, or we shan't get lodgings to-night."

Still trying to detain her, less by hand than by word-of-mouth, Bill kept at her side. But in his whole manner there was still a strong sense of *following;* of one who rather hung on than kept there by right or force of personality; of one who was secretly as much ashamed of his actions as he was the slave of his passion.

Then there was a crunching and a stumbling of feet amongst stones, as they neared the broken end of the wall, and Abs stepped out directly into the path. Even in the darkness and the suddenness of his appearance they knew him, so close he stood to them and so familiar and distinctive was his figure.

" W'are be you a-goin' ? " Abs grimly asked Bill.

" What's that to you ? " was the evasive query.

" I ax you w'are you be a-goin' ? " Abs repeated, and his words sounded hard as the bitter gale that whipped around them.

" To Sandy Bay," Bill sullenly replied, feeling yet only half aware that in the man before him there was a curious mastery which he could neither evade nor overcome.

" An' you ? " said Abs to Elsie quietly, before Bill

could add another word. "W'are be your place to-night, Elsie?"

"Home," said she simply, without hesitation, and making a move closer to him. A revulsion of feeling had been working on her since she left the cove, largely due to the awakening that was consequent on Bill's actions, but in part also to her having fully seen the forfeiture she was making; this was now suddenly complete. In her heart she thanked God for her husband's appearance.

"Just take my oily then—it 'ill keep a bit o' cold out —an' bide aback o' that wall ten minutes 'r so, an' please the Lord we'll go hom' together agen," he said at once, and in the same quiet manner, but with a little less gentleness than when he asked her where she was going.

"But, Abs, Abs, you won't fight!—not here in the dark, like this, an' nobody to see!" she cried, instinct and the hard-worn ethics of her class telling her instantly the hidden meaning of his words.

"Don't you fear, gurl," he answered passing the oiled coat over her shoulders. "I've got to put me mark on this, 'r w'are should I be i' the place. Besides, don't you take on. God'll see me through wi' it."

During this time Bill as quietly stood his ground, knowing that he must fight, whether he took or gave a hiding; and feeling that, as man to man, he ought to be the victor, yet vaguely conscious of a strange sense of unavoidable punishment in and about Abs generally. Elsie began to plead for peace; she feared that he was no physical match for Bill. Before she had uttered a dozen words a new influence appeared; this was Brown, who, having learnt in the hamlet that Abs had been seen going up the eastern cliff after he left the inn, had tramped out to the

headland in the wake of the runaways and was hurrying along in the expectation of overtaking Abs at any minute. He was upon them almost before they knew of his presence, and pulled up not a yard behind Bill, he momentarily amazed as they were. Then, with the manner of Abs in the inn as a key, Brown divined immediately the whole situation, passed around Bill and stood near to Abs and Elsie. Bill saw the action and knew the significance of it; added to his curious feeling about Abs it almost caused him to turn on his heel and double around the ruins. Elsie at once asked Brown to interfere.

"Can't," he answered shortly "'Tisn't for any man to put his hand into a thing o' this sort, 'cept to help; an' if Abs don't hammer him I'll hev to."

Abs led Elsie to where he had told her to go; then he returned, and found big Joe Brown treading about a piece of adjacent ground to discover if it were level enough for the fight. Presently the latter announced that such was the case, so the two men stood up to each other in the biting gale, stripped and determined, whilst Brown crouched low on the grass in order to have the upper halves of the men between him and the leaden sky, the better to watch their actions and to see fair play.

Bill, who had the physical advantages, intended to give as much as he got, despite the fact that he now had no stomach for the fight; but there was about Abs a certain air of righteous mastery—the belief that God was on his side and would give him the victory, because he had kept his oath and never fought since Seth Jenks made him fight and died in consequence.

At Brown's signal, "Let go," they squared towards each other; and suddenly Bill, before a blow could be struck,

lurched forward, as if to butt Abs. The truth was his left foot had slipped abruptly backwards on the wet grass. Of this Abs was ignorant, and up went his knee with such force against Bill's forehead that the latter rolled over and lay still. For a minute or two Abs and Brown waited. Then the big man examined Bill and said:

"Put your things on, mate; he's 'bout had enough; but he'll be all right by-an'-by."

Slowly Abs put on his clothes again. By that time Bill was opening his eyes, with no more fight left in him, as he told Brown in answer to a question on that point. Then said Brown:

"Get you away hom', mate. I'll see him on his feet an' com' on arter you."

Abs went to Elsie, and together they made for home, he saying, "Com' on, Elsie, gurl, let's get hom'—Kitty will be a-wantin' his supper; and we'll see if we can't all be a bit more chummy together arter this. Com' on."

Thus they strode along through the gale, Elsie with no misgivings as to the future, except as to what her neighbours would think and show in their actions; but on this point, as she afterwards discovered, she did not count on the wise and charitable silence of big Joe Brown.

J. J. Patterson.

THE ADVANCE

BY

Cyrus Cuneo

THE ADVANCE.

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THE LAND IRONCLADS.

BY H. G. WELLS.

[*This story was written eight or nine years ago, but it still has a certain interest.*—H. G. W.]

I.

THE young lieutenant lay beside the war correspondent and admired the idyllic calm of the enemy's lines through his field-glass.

"So far as I can see," he said at last, "one man."

"What's he doing?" asked the war correspondent.

"Field-glass at us," said the young lieutenant.

"And this is war!"

"No," said the young lieutenant; "it's Bloch."

"The game's a draw."

"No! They've got to win or else they lose. A draw's a win for our side."

They had discussed the political situation fifty times or so, and the war correspondent was weary of it. He stretched out his limbs. "Aaai s'pose it *is!*" he yawned.

"*Flut!*"

"What was that?"

"Shot at us."

The war correspondent shifted to a slightly lower position. "No one shot at him," he complained.

"I wonder if they think we shall get so bored we shall go home?"

The war correspondent made no reply.

"There's the harvest, of course. . . ."

They had been there a month. Since the first brisk movements after the declaration of war things had gone slower and slower, until it seemed as though the whole machine of events must have run down. To begin with, they had had almost a scampering time; the invader had come across the frontier on the very dawn of the war in half-a-dozen parallel columns behind a cloud of cyclists and cavalry, with a general air of coming straight on the capital, and the defender-horsemen had held him up, and peppered him and forced him to open out to outflank, and had then bolted to the next position in the most approved style, for a couple of days, until in the afternoon, bump! they had the invader against their prepared lines of defence. He did not suffer so much as had been hoped and expected: he was coming on, it seemed, with his eyes open, his scouts winded the guns, and down he sat at once without the shadow of an attack and began grubbing trenches for himself, as though he meant to sit down there to the very end of time. He was slow, but much more wary than the world had been led to expect, and he kept convoys tucked in and shielded his slow marching infantry sufficiently well to prevent any heavy adverse scoring.

"But he ought to attack," the young lieutenant had insisted.

"He'll attack us at dawn, somewhere along the lines. You'll get the bayonets coming into the trenches just about when you can see," the war correspondent had held until a week ago.

The young lieutenant winked when he said that.

When one early morning the men the defenders sent

to lie out five hundred yards before the trenches, with a view to the unexpected emptying of magazines into any night attack, gave way to causeless panic and blazed away at nothing for ten minutes, the war correspondent understood the meaning of that wink.

"What would you do if you were the enemy?" said the war correspondent, suddenly.

"If I had men like I've got now?"

"Yes."

"Take these trenches."

"How?"

"Oh—dodges! Crawl out half-way at night before moonrise and get into touch with the chaps we send out. Blaze at 'em if they tried to shift, and so bang some of 'em in the daylight. Learn that patch of ground by heart, lie all day in squatty holes, and come on nearer next night. There's a bit over there, lumpy ground, where they could get across to rushing distance—easy. In a night or so. It would be a mere game for our fellows; it's what they're made for. . . . Guns? Shrapnel and stuff wouldn't stop good men who meant business."

"Why don't *they* do that?"

"Their men aren't brutes enough; that's the trouble. They're a crowd of devitalised townsmen, and that's the truth of the matter. They're clerks, they're factory hands, they're students, they're civilised men. They can write, they can talk, they can make and do all sorts of things, but they're poor amateurs at war. They've got no physical staying power, and that's the whole thing. They've never slept in the open one night in their lives; they've never drunk anything but the purest water-company water; they've never gone short of three meals a day since they

left their devitalising feeding-bottles. Half their cavalry never cocked leg over horse till it enlisted six months ago. They ride their horses as though they were bicycles—you watch 'em! They're fools at the game, and they know it. Our boys of fourteen can give their grown men points. . . . Very well——"

The war correspondent mused on his face with his nose between his knuckles.

"If a decent civilisation," he said, "cannot produce better men for war than——" He stopped with belated politeness. "I mean——"

"Than our open-air life," said the young lieutenant, politely.

"Exactly," said the war correspondent. "Then civilisation has to stop."

"It looks like it," the young lieutenant admitted.

"Civilisation has science, you know," said the war correspondent. "It invented and it makes the rifles and guns and things you use."

"Which our nice healthy hunters and stockmen and so on, rowdy-dowdy cow-punchers and nigger-whackers, can use ten times better than—— *What's that?*"

"What?" said the war correspondent, and then, seeing his companion busy with his field-glass, he produced his own. "Where?" said the war correspondent, sweeping the enemy's lines.

"It's nothing," said the young lieutenant, still looking.

"What's nothing?"

The young lieutenant put down his glass and pointed. "I thought I saw something there, behind the stems of those trees. Something black. What it was I don't know."

The war correspondent tried to get even by intense scrutiny.

"It wasn't anything," said the young lieutenant, rolling over to regard the darkling evening sky, and generalised: "There never will be anything any more for ever. Unless——"

The war correspondent looked inquiry.

"They may get their stomachs wrong, or something—living without proper drains."

A sound of bugles came from the tents behind. The war correspondent slid backward down the sand and stood up. "Boom!" came from somewhere far away to the left. "Halloa!" he said, hesitated, and crawled back to peer again. "Firing at this time is jolly bad manners."

The young lieutenant was incommunicative again for a space.

Then he pointed to the distant clump of trees again. "One of our big guns. They were firing at that," he said.

"The thing that wasn't anything?"

"Something over there, anyhow."

Both men were silent, peering through their glasses for a space. "Just when it's twilight," the lieutenant complained. He stood up.

"I might stay here a bit," said the war correspondent.

The lieutenant shook his head. "There's nothing to see," he apologised, and then went down to where his little squad of sunbrown, loose-limbed men had been yarning in the trench. The war correspondent stood up also, glanced for a moment at the business-like bustle below him, gave perhaps twenty seconds to those enigmatical trees again, then turned his face towards the camp.

He found himself wondering whether his editor would

consider the story of how somebody thought he saw something black behind a clump of trees, and how a gun was fired at this illusion by somebody else, too trivial for public consumption.

"It's the only gleam of a shadow of interest," said the war correspondent, "for ten whole days."

"No," he said, presently; "I'll write that other article, 'Is War Played Out?'"

He surveyed the darkling lines in perspective, the tangle of trenches one behind another, one commanding another, which the defender had made ready. The shadows and mists swallowed up their receding contours, and here and there a lantern gleamed, and here and there knots of men were busy about small fires. "No troops on earth could do it," he said. . . . .

He was depressed. He believed that there were other things in life better worth having than proficiency in war; he believed that in the heart of civilisation, for all its stresses, its crushing concentrations of forces, its injustice and suffering, there lay something that might be the hope of the world, and the idea that any people by living in the open air, hunting perpetually, losing touch with books and art and all the things that intensify life, might hope to resist and break that great development to the end of time, jarred on his civilised soul.

Apt to his thought came a file of the defender soldiers and passed him in the gleam of a swinging lamp that marked the way.

He glanced at their red-lit faces, and one shone out for a moment, a common type of face in the defender's ranks: ill-shaped nose, sensuous lips, bright clear eyes full of alert cunning, slouch hat cocked on one side and adorned with

the peacock's plume of the rustic Don Juan turned soldier, a hard brown skin, a sinewy frame, an open, tireless stride, and a master's grip on the rifle.

The war correspondent returned their salauttions and went on his way.

"Louts," he whispered. "Cunning, elementary louts. And they are going to beat the townsmen at the game of war!"

From the red glow among the nearer tents came first one and then half-a-dozen hearty voices, bawling in a drawling unison the words of a particularly slab and sentimental patriotic song.

"Oh, *go* it!" muttered the war correspondent, bitterly.

II.

It was opposite the trenches called after Hackbone's Hut that the battle began. There the ground stretched broad and level between the lines, with scarcely shelter for a lizard, and it seemed to the startled, just-awakened men who came crowding into the trenches that this was one more proof of that green inexperience of the enemy of which they had heard so much. The war correspondent would not believe his ears at first, and swore that he and the war artist, who, still imperfectly roused, was trying to put on his boots by the light of a match held in his hand, were the victims of a common illusion. Then, after putting his head in a bucket of cold water, his intelligence came back as he towelled. He listened. "Gollys!" he said; "that's something more than scare firing this time. It's like ten thousand carts on a bridge of tin."

There came a sort of enrichment to that steady uproar. "Machine guns!"

Then, "Guns!"

The artist, with one boot on, thought to look at his watch, and went to it hopping.

"Half an hour from dawn," he said. "You were right about their attacking, after all. . . ."

The war correspondent came out of the tent, verifying the presence of chocolate in his pocket as he did so. He had to halt for a moment or so until his eyes were toned down to the night a little. "Pitch!" he said. He stood for a space to season his eyes before he felt justified in striking out for a black gap among the adjacent tents. The artist coming out behind him fell over a tent-rope. It was half-past two o'clock in the morning of the darkest night in time, and against a sky of dull black silk the enemy was talking searchlights, a wild jabber of searchlights. "He's trying to blind our riflemen," said the war correspondent with a flash, and waited for the artist and then set off with a sort of discreet haste again. "Whoa!" he said, presently. "Ditches!"

They stopped.

"It's the confounded searchlights," said the war correspondent.

They saw lanterns going to and fro near by, and men falling in to march down to the trenches. They were for following them, and then the artist began to feel his night eyes. "If we scramble this," he said, "and it's only a drain, there's a clear run up to the ridge." And that way they took. Lights came and went in the tents behind, as the men turned out, and ever and again they came to broken ground and staggered and stumbled. But in a little while they drew near the crest. Something that sounded like the impact of a very important railway accident happened in

the air above them, and the shrapnel bullets seethed about them like a sudden handful of hail. "Right-ho!" said the war correspondent, and soon they judged they had come to the crest and stood in the midst of a world of great darkness and frantic glares, whose principal fact was sound.

Right and left of them and all about them was the uproar, an army-full of magazine fire, at first chaotic and monstrous, and then, eked out by little flashes and gleams and suggestions, taking the beginnings of a shape. It looked to the war correspondent as though the enemy must have attacked in line and with his whole force—in which case he was either being or was already annihilated.

"Dawn and the Dead," he said, with his instinct for headlines. He said this to himself, but afterwards, by means of shouting, he conveyed an idea to the artist. "They must have meant it for a surprise," he said.

It was remarkable how the firing kept on. After a time he began to perceive a sort of rhythm in this inferno of noise. It would decline—decline perceptibly, droop towards something that was comparatively a pause—a pause of inquiry. "Aren't you all dead yet?" this pause seemed to say. The flickering fringe of rifle-flashes would become attenuated and broken, and the whack-bang of the enemy's big guns two miles away there would come up out of the deeps. Then suddenly, east or west of them, something would startle the rifles to a frantic outbreak again.

The war correspondent taxed his brain for some theory of conflict that would account for this, and was suddenly aware that the artist and he were vividly illuminated. He could see the ridge on which they stood, and before them in black outline a file of riflemen hurrying down towards the nearer trenches. It became visible that a light rain was

falling, and further away towards the enemy was a clear space with men—"our men?"—running across it in disorder. He saw one of those men throw up his hands and drop. And something else black and shining loomed up on the edge of the beam-coruscating flashes; and behind it and far away a calm, white eye regarding the world. "Whit, whit, whit," sang something in the air, and then the artist was running for cover, with the war correspondent behind him. Bang came shrapnel, bursting close at hand, as it seemed, and our two men were lying flat in a dip in the ground, and the light and everything had gone again, leaving a vast note of interrogation upon the night.

The war correspondent came within bawling range. "What the deuce was it? Shooting our men down!"

"Black," said the artist, "and like a fort. Not two hundred yards from the first trench."

He sought for comparisons in his mind. "Something between a big blockhouse and a giant's dish-cover," he said.

"And they were running!" said the war correspondent.

"*You'd* run if a thing like that, with a searchlight to help it, turned up like a prowling nightmare in the middle of the night."

They crawled to what they judged the edge of the dip and lay regarding the unfathomable dark. For a space they could distinguish nothing, and then a sudden convergence of the searchlights of both sides brought the strange thing out again.

In that flickering pallor it had the effect of a large and clumsy black insect, an insect the size of an ironclad cruiser, crawling obliquely to the first line of trenches and firing shots out of portholes in its back.

And on its carcass the bullets must have been battering

with more than the passionate violence of hail on a roof of tin.

Then in the twinkling of an eye the curtain of the dark had fallen again and the monster had vanished, but the crescendo of musketry marked its approach to the trenches.

They were beginning to talk about the thing to each other, when a flying bullet kicked dirt into the artist's face, and they decided abruptly to crawl down into the cover of the trenches. They had got down with an unobtrusive persistence into the second line before the dawn had grown clear enough for anything to be seen. They found themselves in a crowd of expectant riflemen, all noisily arguing about the thing that would happen next. The enemy's contrivance had done execution upon the outlying men, it seemed, but they did not believe it would do any more. "Come the day and we'll capture the lot of them," said a burly soldier.

"Them?" said the war correspondent.

"They say there's a rĕgular string of 'em, crawling along the front of our lines. . . . Who cares?"

The darkness filtered away so imperceptibly that at no moment could one declare decisively that one could see. The searchlights ceased to sweep hither and thither. The enemy's monsters were dubious patches of darkness upon the dark, and then no longer dubious, and so they crept out into distinctness. The war correspondent, munching chocolate absent-mindedly, beheld at last a spacious picture of battle under the cheerless sky, whose central focus was an array of fourteen or fifteen huge, clumsy shapes lying in perspective on the very edge of the first line of trenches, at intervals of perhaps three hundred yards, and evidently firing down upon the crowded riflemen. They were so close

in that the defender's guns had ceased, and only the first line of trenches was in action.

The second line commanded the first, and as the light grew the war correspondent could make out the riflemen who were fighting these monsters, crouched in knots and crowds behind the transverse banks that crossed the trenches against the eventuality of an enfilade. The trenches close to the big machines were empty save for the crumpled suggestions of dead and wounded men; the defenders had been driven right and left as soon as the prow of this land ironclad had loomed up over the front of the trench. He produced his field-glasses, and was immediately a centre of inquiry from the soldiers about him.

They wanted to look, they asked questions, and after he had announced that the men across the traverses seemed unable to advance or retreat, and were crouching under cover rather than fighting, he found it advisable to loan his glasses to a burly and incredulous corporal. He heard a strident voice, and found a lean and sallow soldier at his back talking to the artist.

"There's chaps down there caught," the man was saying. "If they retreat they got to expose themselves, and the fire's too straight. . . . They aren't firing much, but every shot's a hit."

"Who?"

"The chaps in that thing. The men who're coming up——"

"Coming up where?"

"We're evacuating them trenches where we can. Our chaps are coming back up the zigzags. . . . No end of 'em hit. . . . But when we get clear our turn'll come. Rather! Those things won't be able to cross a trench or get into it;

and before they can get back our guns'll smash 'em up. Smash 'em right up. See?" A brightness came into his eyes. "Then we'll have a go at the beggars inside," he said. . . .

The war correspondent thought for a moment, trying to realise the idea. Then he set himself to recover his field-glasses from the burly corporal. . . .

The daylight was getting clearer now. The clouds were lifting, and a gleam of lemon yellow amidst the level masses to the east portended sunrise. He looked again at the land ironclad. As he saw it in the bleak, grey dawn, lying obliquely upon the slope and on the very lip of the foremost trench, the suggestion of a stranded vessel was very great indeed. It might have been from eighty to a hundred feet long—it was about two hundred and fifty yards away—its vertical side was ten feet high or so, smooth for that height, and then with a complex patterning under the eaves of its flattish turtle cover. This patterning was a close interlacing of portholes, rifle barrels, and telescope tubes—sham and real—indistinguishable one from the other. The thing had come into such a position as to enfilade the trench, which was empty now, so far as he could see, except for two or three crouching knots of men and the tumbled-looking dead. Behind it, across the plain, it had scored the grass with a train of linked impressions, like the dotted tracings sea-things leave in sand. Left and right of that track dead men and wounded men were scattered—men it had picked off as they fled back from their advanced positions in the searchlight glare from the invader's lines. And now it lay with its head projecting a little over the trench it had won, as if it were a single sentient thing planning the next phase of its attack. . . .

He lowered his glasses and took a more comprehensive view of the situation. These creatures of the night had evidently won the first line of trenches and the fight had come to a pause. In the increasing light he could make out by a stray shot or a chance exposure that the defender's marksmen were lying thick in the second and third line of trenches up towards the low crest of the position, and in such of the zigzags as gave them a chance of a converging fire. The men about him were talking of guns. "We're in the line of the big guns at the crest, but they'll soon shift one to pepper them," the lean man said, reassuringly.

"Whup," said the corporal.

"Bang! bang! bang! Whir-r-r-r-r!" it was a sort of nervous jump, and all the rifles were going off by themselves. The war correspondent found himself and the artist two idle men crouching behind a line of preoccupied backs of industrious men discharging magazines. The monster had moved. It continued to move regardless of the hail that splashed its skin with bright new specks of lead. It was singing a mechanical little ditty to itself, "Tuf-tuf, tuf-tuf, tuf-tuf," and squirting out little jets of steam behind. It had humped itself up, as a limpet does before it crawls; it had lifted its skirt and displayed along the length of it—*feet!* They were thick, stumpy feet, between knobs and buttons in shape—flat, broad things, reminding one of the feet of elephants or the legs of caterpillars; and then, as the skirt rose higher, the war correspondent, scrutinising the thing through his glasses again, saw that these feet hung, as it were, on the rims of wheels. His thoughts whirled back to Victoria Street, Westminster, and he saw himself in the piping times of peace seeking matter for an interview.

"Mr.—Mr. Diplock," he said; "and he called them Pedrails. . . . Fancy meeting them here!"

The marksman beside him raised his head and shoulders in a speculative mood to fire more certainly—it seemed so natural to assume the attention of the monster must be distracted by the trench before it—and was suddenly knocked backwards by a bullet through his neck. His feet flew up, and he vanished out of the margin of the watcher's field of vision. The war correspondent grovelled tighter, but after a glance behind him at a painful little confusion, he resumed his field-glass, for the thing was putting down its feet one after the other, and hoisting itself farther and farther over the trench. Only a bullet in the head could have stopped him looking just then.

The lean man with the strident voice ceased firing to turn and reiterate his point. "They can't possibly cross," he bawled. "They——"

"Bang, bang! Bang, bang!"—drowned everything.

The lean man continued speaking for a word or so, then gave it up, shook his head to enforce the impossibility of anything crossing a trench like the one below, and resumed business once more.

And all the while that great bulk was crossing. When the war correspondent turned his glass on it again it had bridged the trench, and its queer feet were rasping away at the farther bank, in the attempt to get a hold there. It got its hold. It continued to crawl until the greater bulk of it was over the trench—until it was all over. Then it paused for a moment, adjusted its skirt a little nearer the ground, gave an unnerving "toot, toot," and came on abruptly at a pace of, perhaps, six miles an hour straight up the gentle slope towards our observer.

The war correspondent raised himself on his elbow and looked a natural inquiry at the artist.

For a moment the men about him stuck to their position and fired furiously. Then the lean man in a mood of precipitancy slid backwards, and the war correspondent said "Come along" to the artist, and led the movement along the trench.

As they dropped down, the vision of a hillside of trench being rushed by a dozen vast cockroaches disappeared for a space, and instead was one of a narrow passage, crowded with men, for the most part receding, though one or two turned or halted. He never turned back to see the nose of the monster creep over the brow of the trench; he never even troubled to keep in touch with the artist. He heard the "whit" of bullets about him soon enough, and saw a man before him stumble and drop, and then he was one of a furious crowd fighting to get into a transverse zigzag ditch that enabled the defenders to get under cover up and down the hill. It was like a theatre panic. He gathered from signs and fragmentary words that on ahead another of these monsters had also won to the second trench.

He lost his interest in the general course of the battle for a space altogether; he became simply a modest egotist, in a mood of hasty circumspection, seeking the farthest rear, amidst a dispersed multitude of disconcerted riflemen similarly employed. He scrambled down through trenches, he took his courage in both hands and sprinted across the open, he had moments of panic when it seemed madness not to be quadrupedal, and moments of shame when he stood up and faced about to see how the fight was going. And he was one of many thousand very similar men that morning. On the ridge he halted in a knot of scrub, and

was for a few minutes almost minded to stop and see things out.

The day was now fully come. The grey sky had changed to blue, and of all the cloudy masses of the dawn there remained only a few patches of dissolving fleeciness. The world below was bright and singularly clear. The ridge was not, perhaps, more than a hundred feet or so above the general plain, but in this flat region it sufficed to give the effect of extensive view. Away on the north side of the ridge, little and far, were the camps, the ordered waggons, all the gear of a big army; with officers galloping about and men doing aimless things. Here and there men were falling-in, however, and the cavalry was forming up on the plain beyond the tents. The bulk of men who had been in the trenches were still on the move to the rear, scattered like sheep without a shepherd over the farther slopes. Here and there were little rallies and attempts to wait and do—something vague; but the general drift was away from any concentration. Then on the southern side was the elaborate lacework of trenches and defences, across which these iron turtles, fourteen of them spread out over a line of perhaps three miles, were now advancing as fast as a man could trot, and methodically shooting down and breaking up any persistent knots of resistance. Here and there stood little clumps of men, outflanked and unable to get away, showing the white flag, and the invader's cyclist infantry was advancing now across the open, in open order but unmolested, to complete the work of the machines. So far as the day went, the defenders already looked a beaten army. A mechanism that was effectually ironclad against bullets, that could at a pinch cross a thirty-foot trench, and that seemed able to shoot out rifle-bullets with unerring precision,

was clearly an inevitable victor against anything but rivers, precipices, and guns.

He looked at his watch. "Half-past four! Lord! What things can happen in two hours. Here's the whole blessed army being walked over, and at half-past two—— And even now our blessed louts haven't done a thing with their guns!"

He scanned the ridge right and left of him with his glasses. He turned again to the nearest land ironclad, advancing now obliquely to him and not three hundred yards away, and then scanned the ground over which he must retreat if he was not to be captured.

"They'll do nothing," he said, and glanced again at the enemy.

And then from far away to the left came the thud of a gun, followed very rapidly by a rolling gun-fire.

He hesitated and decided to stay.

III.

The defender had relied chiefly upon his rifles in the event of an assault. His guns he kept concealed at various points upon and behind the ridge ready to bring them into action against any artillery preparations for an attack on the part of his antagonist. The situation had rushed upon him with the dawn, and by the time the gunners had their guns ready for motion, the land ironclads were already in among the foremost trenches. There is a natural reluctance to fire into one's own broken men, and many of the guns, being intended simply to fight in advance of the enemy's artillery, were not in positions to hit anything in the second line of trenches. After that the advance of the land ironclads

was swift. The defender general found himself suddenly called upon to invent a new sort of warfare, in which guns were to fight alone amidst broken and retreating infantry. He had scarcely thirty minutes in which to think it out. He did not respond to the call, and what happened that morning was that the advance of the land ironclads forced the fight, and each gun and battery made what play its circumstances dictated. For the most part it was poor play.

Some of the guns got in two or three shots, some one or two, and the percentage of misses was unusually high. The howitzers, of course, did nothing. The land ironclads in each case followed much the same tactics. As soon as a gun came into play the monster turned itself almost end on, so as to get the biggest chance of a glancing hit, and made not for the gun, but for the nearest point on its flank from which the gunners could be shot down. Few of the hits scored were very effectual; only one of the things was disabled, and that was the one that fought the three batteries attached to the brigade on the left wing. Three that were hit when close upon the guns were clean shot through without being put out of action. Our war correspondent did not see that one momentary arrest of the tide of victory on the left; he saw only the very ineffectual fight of half-battery 96B close at hand upon his right. This he watched some time beyond the margin of safety.

Just after he heard the three batteries opening up upon his left he became aware of the thud of horses' hoofs from the sheltered side of the slope, and presently saw first one and then two other guns galloping into position along the north side of the ridge, well out of sight of the great bulk that was now creeping obliquely towards the crest and cutting up the lingering infantry beside it and below as it came.

The half-battery swung round into line—each gun describing its curve—halted, unlimbered, and prepared for action. . . .

"Bang!"

The land ironclad had become visible over the brow of the hill, and just visible as a long black back to the gunners. It halted, as though it hesitated.

The two remaining guns fired, and then their big antagonist had swung round and was in full view, end on, against the sky, coming at a rush.

The gunners became frantic in their haste to fire again. They were so near, the war correspondent could see the expression of their excited faces through his field-glass. As he looked he saw a man drop, and realized for the first time that the ironclad was shooting.

For a moment the big black monster crawled with an accelerated pace towards the furiously active gunners. Then, as if moved by a generous impulse, it turned its full broadside to their attack, and scarcely forty yards away from them. The war correspondent turned his field-glass back to the gunners and perceived it was now shooting down the men about the guns with the most deadly rapidity.

Just for a moment it seemed splendid, and then it seemed horrible. The gunners were dropping in heaps about their guns. To lay a hand on a gun was death. "Bang!" went the gun on the left, a hopeless miss, and that was the only second shot the half-battery fired. In another moment half-a-dozen surviving artillerymen were holding up their hands amidst a scattered muddle of dead and wounded men, and the fight was done.

The war correspondent hesitated between stopping in his scrub and waiting for an opportunity to surrender

decently, or taking to an adjacent gully he had discovered. If he surrendered it was certain he would get no copy off; while if he escaped there were all sorts of chances. He decided to follow the gully, and take the first offer in the confusion beyond the camp of picking up a horse.

IV.

Subsequent authorities have found fault with the first land ironclads in many particulars, but assuredly they served their purpose on the day of their appearance. They were essentially long, narrow, and very strong steel frameworks carrying the engines, and borne upon eight pairs of big pedrail wheels, each about ten feet in diameter, each a driving wheel and set upon long axles free to swivel round a common axis. This arrangement gave them the maximum of adaptability to the contours of the ground. They crawled level along the ground with one foot high upon a hillock and another deep in a depression, and they could hold themselves erect and steady sideways upon even a steep hillside. The engineers directed the engines under the command of the captain, who had look-out points at small ports all round the upper edge of the adjustable skirt of twelve-inch iron-plating which protected the whole affair, and who could also raise or depress a conning-tower set about the portholes through the centre of the iron top cover. The riflemen each occupied a small cabin of peculiar construction, and these cabins were slung along the sides of and before and behind the great main framework, in a manner suggestive of the slinging of the seats of an Irish jaunting-car. Their rifles, however, were very different pieces of apparatus from the simple mechanisms in the hands of their adversaries.

These were in the first place automatic, ejected their cartridges and loaded again from a magazine each time they fired until the ammunition store was at an end, and they had the most remarkable sights imaginable, sights which threw a bright little camera-obscura picture into the light-tight box in which the rifleman sat below. This camera-obscura picture was marked with two crossed lines, and whatever was covered by the intersection of these two lines, that the rifle hit. The sighting was ingeniously contrived. The rifleman stood at the table with a thing like an elaboration of a draughtsman's dividers in his hand, and he opened and closed these dividers so that they were always at the apparent height—if it was an ordinary-sized man—of the man he wanted to kill. A little twisted strand of wire like an electric-light wire ran from this implement up to the gun, and as the dividers opened and shut the sights went up or down. Changes in the clearness of the atmosphere, due to changes of moisture, were met by an ingenious use of that meteorologically sensitive substance, catgut; and when the land ironclad moved forward the sights got a compensatory deflection in the direction of its motion. The rifleman stood up in his pitch-dark chamber and watched the little picture before him. One hand held the dividers for judging distance, and the other grasped a big knob like a door-handle. As he pushed this knob about the rifle above swung to correspond, and the picture passed to and fro like an agitated panorama. When he saw a man he wanted to shoot he brought him up to the cross-lines, and then pressed a finger upon a little push like an electric bell push, conveniently placed in the centre of the knob. Then the man was shot. If by any chance the rifleman missed his target he moved the knob a trifle, or readjusted his dividers, pressed the push, and got him the second time.

This rifle and its sights protruded from a porthole, exactly like a great number of other portholes that ran in a triple row under the eaves of the cover of the land ironclad. Each porthole displayed a rifle and sight in dummy, so that the real ones could only be hit by a chance shot, and if one was, then the young man below said " Pshaw ! " turned on an electric light, lowered the injured instrument into his camera, replaced the injured part, or put up a new rifle if the injury was considerable.

You must conceive these cabins as hung clear above the swing of the axles, and inside the big wheels upon which the great elephant-like feet were hung, and behind these cabins along the centre of the monster ran a central gallery into which they opened, and along which worked the big compact engines. It was like a long passage into which this throbbing machinery had been packed, and the captain stood about the middle, close to the ladder that led to his conning-tower, and directed the silent, alert engineers—for the most part by signs. The throb and noise of the engines mingled with the reports of the rifles and the intermittent clangour of the bullet hail upon the armour. Ever and again he would touch the wheel that raised his conning-tower, step up his ladder until his engineers could see nothing of him above the waist, and then come down again with orders. Two small electric lights were all the illumination of this space—they were placed to make him most clearly visible to his subordinates ; the air was thick with the smell of oil and petrol, and had the war correspondent been suddenly transferred from the spacious dawn outside to the bowels of this apparatus he would have thought himself fallen into another world.

The captain, of course, saw both sides of the battle,

When he raised his head into his conning-tower there were the dewy sunrise, the amazed and disordered trenches, the flying and falling soldiers, the depressed-looking groups of prisoners, the beaten guns; when he bent down again to signal "Half speed," "Quarter speed," "Half circle round towards the right," or what not, he was in the oil-smelling twilight of the ill-lit engine-room. Close beside him on either side was the mouthpiece of a speaking-tube, and ever and again he would direct one side or other of his strange craft to "Concentrate fire forward on gunners," or to "Clear out trench about a hundred yards on our right front."

He was a young man, healthy enough but by no means sun-tanned, and of a type of feature and expression that prevails in His Majesty's Navy: alert, intelligent, quiet. He and his engineers and his riflemen all went about their work, calm and reasonable men. They had none of that flapping strenuousness of the half-wit in a hurry, that excessive strain upon the blood-vessels, that hysteria of effort which is so frequently regarded as the proper state of mind for heroic deeds. If their machine had demanded anything of the sort they would, of course, have improved their machine. They were all perfectly sober and in good training, and if any of them had begun to ejaculate nonsense or bawl patriotic airs, the others would probably have gagged him and tied him up as a dangerous, unnerving sort of fool. And if they were free from hysteria they were equally free from that stupid affectation of nonchalance which is the refuge of the thoroughly incapable in danger. Death was abroad, and there were marginal possibilities of the unforeseen, but it is no good calculating upon the incalculable, and so beyond a certain unavoidable tightening up of nerve and muscle, a certain firmness of the lips, this affected them not at all.

For the enemy these young engineers were defeating they felt a certain qualified pity and a quite unqualified contempt. They regarded these big, healthy men they were shooting down precisely as these same big, healthy men might regard some inferior kind of nigger. They despised them for making war, despised their bawling patriotisms and their emotionality profoundly; despised them, above all, for the petty cunning and the almost brutish want of imagination their method of fighting displayed. "If they *must* make war," these young men thought, "why in thunder don't they do it like sensible men?" They resented the assumption that their own side was too stupid to do anything more than play their enemy's game, that they were going to play this costly folly according to the rules of unimaginative men. They resented being forced to the trouble of making man-killing machinery; resented the alternative of having to massacre these people or endure their truculent yappings; resented the whole unfathomable imbecility of war.

Meanwhile, with something of the mechanical precision of a good clerk posting a ledger, the riflemen moved their knobs and pressed their buttons. . . .

The captain of Land Ironclad Number Three had halted on the crest close to his captured half-battery. His lined-up prisoners stood hard by and waited for the cyclists behind to come for them. He surveyed the victorious morning through his conning-tower.

He read the general's signals: "Five and Four are to keep among the guns to the left and prevent any attempt to recover them. Seven and Eleven and Twelve, stick to the guns you have got; Seven, get into position to command the guns taken by Three. Then we're to do something else,

are we ? Six and One, quicken up to about ten miles an hour and walk round behind that camp to the levels near the river —we shall bag the whole crowd of them," interjected the young man. "Ah, here we are ! Two and Three, Eight and Nine, Thirteen and Fourteen, space out to a thousand yards, wait for the word, and then go slowly to cover the advance of the cyclist infantry against any charge of mounted troops. That's all right. But where's Ten ? Halloa ! Ten to repair and get movable as soon as possible. They've broken up Ten !"

The discipline of the new war machines was business-like rather than pedantic, and the head of the captain came down out of the conning-tower to tell his men. "I say, you chaps there. They've broken up Ten. Not badly, I think ; but anyhow, he's struck !"

But that still left thirteen of the monsters in action to finish up the broken army.

The war correspondent stealing down his gully looked back and saw them all lying along the crest and talking fluttering congratulatory flags to one another. Their iron sides were shining golden in the light of the rising sun.

V.

The private adventures of the war correspondent terminated in surrender about one o'clock in the afternoon, and by that time he had stolen a horse, pitched off it, and narrowly escaped being rolled upon ; found the brute had broken its leg, and shot it with his revolver. He had spent some hours in the company of a squad of dispirited riflemen, who had commandeered his field-glass, and whose pedestrianism was exemplary, and he had quarrelled with them about

topography at last, and gone off by himself in a direction that should have brought him to the banks of the river, and didn't. Moreover, he had eaten all his chocolate, and found nothing in the whole world to drink. Also, it had become extremely hot. From behind a broken, but attractive, stone wall he had seen far away in the distance the defender horsemen trying to charge cyclists in open order, with land ironclads outflanking them on either side. He had discovered that cyclists could retreat over open turf before horsemen with a sufficient margin of speed to allow of frequent dismounts and much terribly effective sharpshooting; and he had a sufficient persuasion that those horsemen, having charged their hearts out, had halted just beyond his range of vision and surrendered. He had been urged to sudden activity by a forward movement of one of those machines that had threatened to enfilade his wall. He had discovered a fearful blister on his heel.

He was now in a scrubby, gravelly place, sitting down and meditating on his pocket-handkerchief, which had in some extraordinary way become in the last twenty-four hours extremely ambiguous in hue. "It's the whitest thing I've got," he said.

He had known all along that the enemy was east, west, and south of him, but when he heard war ironclads Numbers One and Six talking in their measured, deadly way not half a mile to the north, he decided to make his own little unconditional peace without any further risks. He was for hoisting his white flag to a bush and taking up a position of modest obscurity near it, until someone came along. He became aware of voices, clatter, and the distinctive noises of a body of horse, quite near, and he put his handkerchief in his pocket again and went to see what was going forward.

The sound of firing ceased, and then as he drew near he heard the deep sounds of many simple, coarse, but hearty and noble-hearted soldiers of the old school swearing with vigour.

He emerged from his scrub upon a big level plain, and far away a fringe of trees marked the banks of the river.

In the centre of the picture was a still intact road bridge, and a big railway bridge a little to the right. Two land ironclads rested, with a general air of being long, harmless sheds, in a pose of anticipatory peacefulness, right and left of the picture, completely commanding two miles and more of the river levels. Emerged and halted a little from the scrub was the remainder of the defender's cavalry, dusty, a little disordered and obviously annoyed, but still a very fine show of men. In the middle distance three or four men and horses were receiving medical attendance, and a little nearer a knot of officers regarded the distant novelties in mechanism with profound distaste. Everyone was very distinctly aware of the twelve other ironclads, and of the multitude of townsmen soldiers, on bicycles or afoot, encumbered now by prisoners and captured war-gear but otherwise thoroughly effective, who were sweeping like a great net in their rear.

"Checkmate," said the war correspondent, walking out into the open. "But I surrender in the best of company. Twenty-four hours ago I thought war was impossible—and these beggars have captured the whole blessed army! Well! Well!" He thought of his talk with the young lieutenant. "If there's no end to the surprises of science, the civilised people have it, of course. As long as their science keeps going they will necessarily be ahead of open-country men. Still. . . ."

He wondered for a space what might have happened to the young lieutenant.

The war correspondent was one of those inconsistent people who always want the beaten side to win. When he saw all these burly, sun-tanned horsemen, disarmed and dismounted and lined up; when he saw their horses unskilfully led away by the singularly not equestrian cyclists to whom they had surrendered; when he saw these truncated Paladins watching this scandalous sight, he forgot altogether that he had called these men "cunning louts" and wished them beaten not four-and-twenty hours ago. A month ago he had seen that regiment in its pride going forth to war, and had been told of its terrible prowess, how it could charge in open order with each man firing from his saddle, and sweep before it anything else that ever came out to battle in any sort of order, foot or horse. And it had had to fight a few score of young men in atrociously unfair machines!

"Manhood *versus* Machinery" occurred to him as a suitable headline. Journalism curdles all one's mind to phrases.

He strolled as near the lined-up prisoners as the sentinels seemed disposed to permit and surveyed them and compared their sturdy proportions with those of their lightly-built captors.

"Smart degenerates," he muttered. "Anæmic cockneydom."

The surrendered officers came quite close to him presently, and he could hear the colonel's high-pitched tenor. The poor gentleman had spent three years of arduous toil upon the best material in the world, perfecting that shooting from the saddle charge, and he was inquiring with phrases of blasphemy, natural under the circumstances, what one

could be expected to do against this suitably consigned ironmongery.

"Guns," said someone.

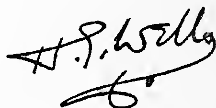
"Big guns they can walk round. You can't shift big guns to keep pace with them, and little guns in the open they rush. I saw 'em rushed. You might do a surprise now and then—assassinate the brutes, perhaps——"

"You might make things like 'em."

"What? *More* ironmongery? Us? . . ."

"I'll call my article," meditated the war correspondent, "'Mankind *versus* Ironmongery,' and quote the old boy at the beginning."

But in the end he called it "The *Reductio ad Absurdum* of War."



WE THAT LOOK ON

BY

AUSTIN DOBSON

WE THAT LOOK ON.

We that look on, with God's goodwill,
Have one plain duty to fulfil:
  To drive—by all fair means—afar
  This hideous Juggernaut of War,
And teach the Future not to kill.

But there's a plainer duty still:
We need to meet the instant ill,
  To heal the wound, to hide the scar—
    We that look on!

What clearer task for brain and quill
Than aiding eyes no light can thrill,
  No sight of all good things that are,
  No morning sky, no evening star—
Shall we not help with all our skill,
    We that look on?

Austin Dobson

THE HOLY GRAIL

—I, Galahad, saw the Grail,
The Holy Grail, descend upon the shrine:
I saw the fiery face as of a child
That smote itself into the Bread, and went.

—*Tennyson's "Idylls of the King."*

Facing p. 126 THE HOLY GRAIL. [*By R. L. Knowles.*

SHAKESPEARE AND THE GERMANS.

By G. K. Chesterton.

No one nation can alone create any influence that is common in Christendom; but there is usually one nation which specially encourages it. And just as France has, on the whole, encouraged whatever is liberal and intellectual, it is not too much to say that Germany has encouraged what is illiberal, and especially what is literal. The German professors have done a great many devastating things; but perhaps the worst thing about them was that they were the first to understand Shakespeare. It is a great impertinence to understand Shakespeare: for Shakespeare certainly did not understand himself. He never talked so much sense as when he was obviously talking nonsense; and a man must have the sacred streak of nonsense somewhere in his mind before he can appreciate phrases like: "Those earthly godfathers of Heaven's lights," or "Bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven." Now, the Germans are like the ladies whom Mr. Sparkler admired. They have no nonsense about them. Some of them seem to think that Hamlet meant what he said; and, thinking this, they come to the not unreasonable conclusion that he was mad. There is in Shakespeare something more godlike even than humour: something which the English call fun. The neglect of this by the Germans during the long night of German intellectual domination has produced

some preposterous fruits in English, American and other criticism. The notes in my school books used to be full of alternative explanations, frequently German, of such phrases as: "I know a hawk from a hand-saw." Grumpt says that "hand-saw" should obviously be heron-shaw, to put it in the same ornithological class with hawk; but Mumpt suggests that there may have been an Elizabethan tool called a hawk, to put it in the same mechanical class with hand-saw. And all the time even a boy who had any flavour of literature, or any guess at the kind of man that Hamlet was supposed to be, could see at once that it was a joke. Hamlet said it as a piece of wild alliteration; as he might have said: "I know a baby from a blunderbuss"; or, "I know a catfish from a croquet-hoop." By a deep and dry study of the million exaggerations, inconsistencies and ignorances of Shakespeare they build up a sort of rampart round the unfortunate poet to defend him from his real admirers; for the sulky Ben Jonson had far more genuine sympathy with Shakespeare than the world-patronising Goethe. The Germans are quite capable of maintaining that there was a sea-coast of Bohemia in Shakespeare's time—before the divine mission of the German Empire with its hands had prepared the dry land. And indeed a sea-coast is not more unnatural in Bohemia than a great Navy in Germany. The first and fatal step was to take Shakespeare seriously; the next and more fatal step was to defend him in everything. The next step was to go clean off one's head and say he was a German, or, worse still, a Lord Chancellor.

For Baconianism, whether known or unknown in Germany, is the very type and fruit of the German method of criticism. It is the criticism that will build a toppling

tower up to the stars upon one word. It is, as a rule, a word that is possibly a misprint, and certainly a mistake. It thrives upon those thousand-fold and thickly-strewn coincidences which one can find anywhere, as one can find faces in a Turkey carpet. It delights in conceiving the man of genius as a kind of conspirator, going to work in a self-conscious and complicated way, and leaving little clues for the elect. It leaves out of all its calculations three great truths without which art would really be the wasting idolatry that Tolstoi thought it. The first is that a great man is, among other things, a man. The second is, that he is superficial, in the sense that he only brushes the deep with a feather. The third is that every great artist in his heart scorns art, as compared with the greatness of God and man.

SIR GALAHAD

BY

W. Heath Robinson

HOW IT WAS THAT SIR GALAHAD CAME TO THINK HE HAD BEEN SUDDENLY TRANSPORTED TO AN ENCHANTED FOREST.

SMOKE RINGS.

BY ANTHONY HOPE.

JOHN (*smoking*). THOMAS (*smoking*).

(JOHN *speaks*).

"Hullo! here's a notice of Flossie Maurice's marriage."

"What? to Charlie Denton?"

"Yes. They had a bishop, and an archdeacon, and everything handsome about them."

"It's been on some time, hasn't it?"

"Oh, I don't know. They seem to have lots of presents."

"Did you send one?"

"No, I've not seen her lately, and I never knew him."

"No more did I—more than to nod to."

"She used to be rather pretty."

"Yes, in a way."

"Oh, I didn't mean she was a beauty."

"She knew how to make the most of herself."

"Yes; wonder how Denton'll like it!"

"He's an easy-going fellow, I hear."

"I hope he'll find it easy going."

"Well, I suppose she's a bit of a flirt."

"They used to say so at Scarborough."

"They said a good many things at Scarborough."

"Well, a good many things were true at Scarborough."

"Not a bad place, though; was it, Jack?"

"Not if you met the right girl on the front, old fellow."

"Let's see—Flossie Maurice used to be there sometimes, wasn't she?"

"I think I remember seeing her once."

"Denton wasn't there, was he?"

"No; she didn't know Denton then."

"She always had lots of partners at the dances."

"Yes, Tommy—when she didn't prefer one for the whole evening."

"I'm not sure she wasn't right there, you know."

"Pleasant, but dangerous, old fellow."

"The fact is, she took amazingly."

"Oh, there was a sort of go about her."

"Wasn't there? By Jove! I remember her one night—she was in pale blue, and looked——"

"Gad, I remember that night, Tom; I was there."

"Of course you were, old fellow. We had a drink together before we went away."

"Yes, I remember wanting a drink."

"So do I. The room was beastly hot."

"Beastly."

(*Interval.*)

"Well, just to show you how that girl went down, to my certain knowledge she had two offers that one evening."

"Not really?"

"Yes, and one of them a fellow who was well off, you know."

"How did you hear about it, Jack?"

"Oh, somehow or other."

"Well, she did look ripping that night."

"Didn't she? I sat out a dance with her."

"What, in that old conservatory?"

"Why, do you know it?"

"Every time, old chap."

"Behind that palm?"

"Rather. I sat out one with her there too."

(*An interval of five minutes. They smoke.* THOMAS *resumes the conversation.*)

"You know, if I'd stayed there long, I won't swear I shouldn't have made an ass of myself."

"Well, where a girl has eyes like that——"

"By Jove, Jack, what eyes she had!"

"Nice hair, too; jolly and soft."

"Hullo, old fellow?"

"Looked silky, I mean, Tom."

"Oh—ah, yes. Pretty little hand too."

"Seemed like nothing when you held it—shaking hands, I mean."

"And she used to look as if—don't you know?"

"I know—as if she'd come on purpose to meet you."

"I suppose she did it to everybody?"

"Looks like it, Tom, doesn't it?"

(*An interval, etc.* JOHN *resumes.*)

"I was a young ass."

"Pass the weeds. What?"

"Nothing."

"You know, Jack—hang the thing! it won't light—I never saw her after that night."

"Neither did I. But then I had to go the next day."

"I went the next day too; I forget why."

"Well, there wasn't much to stay for."

"No, was there?"

"What's this fellow Denton like, Tom?

"Oh, an overgrown, lopsided beggar."

"Shekels?"

"Piles."

"That's why she took him, I suppose."

"Must be."

(*A pause.*)

"I don't mind saying, Jack, that I was a bit gone on that girl myself. Just that night, you know."

"I was beginning to guess it. We might have been rivals."

"What, you were——"

"Well, not far off."

"She did look so deuced——"

"Yes, didn't she?"

"She entered so into all you said."

"Oh, she wasn't a fool by a long way."

"A sort of sympathy about her."

"I don't wonder at a fellow asking her, Jack."

"I've known it done with less excuse, Tom."

(*An interval, etc.* THOMAS *resumes.*)

"Jack, old man, I did make a fool of myself that night."

"What? You don't mean to say you did ask her?"

"Yes, I did—just before that drink."

"Gad, now, so did I, half an hour before it."

"What did she say to you?"

"Told me we should always be friends, hang her!"
"That's what she told me. I've never seen her since."
"No more have I."
"I'd no notion you asked her."
"Well, I never thought you did till just now."
"I wanted that drink, Jack."
"So did I, old man."

(*An interval, etc.* JOHN *resumes.*)

"Ever asked a girl since, Tom?"
"No, have you?"
"No. Have a drink?"
"I don't mind if I do, Jack."

I HEARD THE DESERT CALLING

BY

GILBERT PARKER

I HEARD THE DESERT CALLING.

I HEARD the desert calling, and my heart stood still—
  There was winter in my world and in my heart;
A breath came from the mesa, and a message stirred my will,
  And my soul and I arose up to depart.

I heard the desert calling, and I knew that over there,
  In an olive-sheltered garden where the mesquite grows,
Was a woman of the sunrise with the star-shine in her hair
  And a beauty that the almond-blossom blows.

In the night-time when the ghost-trees glimmered in the moon,
  Where the mesa by the water-course was spanned,
Her loveliness enwrapped me like the blessedness of June,
  And all my life was thrilling in her hand.

I hear the desert calling, and my heart stands still—
  There is summer in my world, and in my heart;
A breath comes from the mesa, and a will beyond my will
  Binds my footsteps as I rise up to depart.

THOUGHTS IN A GARDEN.

By Arnold White.

"As is the gardener, so is the garden."

On a Sunday morning, in the most beautiful June we have enjoyed for many years, a staff officer sat in my garden. He was about to leave England for the front, after a few days' furlough. There was much conversation, and there were long silences. The scent of the roses—"Zephrine Drouhin" and "La France"—mingled with the exhilarating perfume of hundreds of the new purple violas. The bees thronged. Larks burst their throats with song; little clouds sailed overhead; the west wind rustled through oak and beech.

We sat in the shade of an oak tree. My friend's features were gaunt and sunburnt. A monoplane with a shining body passed quickly over us. In one of the intervals of silence I saw tears in the eyes of my guest. He was thinking of the contrast between the scenes he had quitted, and to which he was about to return, and the English garden in which he was breathing the atmosphere exhaled by the green grass, the trees, and the beauty and perfume of flowers.

After his return to France my friend wrote to me:—"Do you know that I felt it was wicked to sit in your garden?" It is easy to interpret his saying. Knowing

what the Army was doing in the front, what the wounded were suffering, what the Royal Army Medical Corps, the Army Service Corps, the Navy, the nurses, the railway men and everybody concerned, are doing in the war, the contrast between the repose of an English garden in June and the work in the trenches against devils, or in the base hospitals, was fraught with pain.

The art of life is to understand things so that all we do and say, suffer or enjoy, shall be in harmony with the laws of Nature and the Infinities. Thousands of people write about flowers, and about gardens. Many of them gush; but in the wide range of our human life there is nothing more precious than the precision with which flowers fill their place in the scheme of things. As a soldier's loyalty is to his regiment, and a seaman's to his ship (whoever the officers and men may be), so our loyalty and love of flowers is to the race, not to individual flowers. You cannot live and work among flowers without gradually becoming conscious that in some flowers, and some trees, there is a dim personality.

Everyone who is a bit of a gardener soon discovers that some people are liked by the flowers they cultivate, others are not. In the same district, almost on the same spot, one person succeeds with a flower where another absolutely fails.

A Scottish nasturtium, known as the "Flame Flower," is clothed with leaves from which spring clouds of brilliant vermilion. The effect is startling. This flower came from South America, and though it is as hardy as it is beautiful, it can be said to flourish only on the walls and roofs of North Britain. It makes its way through evergreen shrubs, and it is the ambition of every English flower-grower to grow it.

For eight years I have tried, and failed to do so. A neighbour of mine, living within a quarter of a mile of my home, made friends with the plant at the first attempt, and succeeded in establishing the beautiful "Flame Flower." It bloomed for her, I verily believe, because she is gentle and good.

That is always the way. When women do things well, they do them better than men, although the human race began in a garden where a woman made a mess of things.

Josephine induced Napoleon, in the crisis of his fortunes, to think and plot and plan for the fragrance and beauty of new flowers for her garden. French naval captains were instructed to bring back from the tropics and the sub-tropics new and beautiful flowers for Josephine. The "Lapageria" was brought to Napoleon from Mauritius, and named after Mademoiselle de la Pagerie, as she was then. The flower is common in English conservatories to-day.

I wish I could send a basket of rosebuds to every soldier in the front, and to every seaman in the North Sea, the Dardanelles, the Persian Gulf, the Euphrates, and the noisome African rivers, east and west, where the handyman fights the frightfulness of Germany and the frightfulness of Nature. In the engine-rooms of warships in the Persian Gulf the Dolphin flowers—known as delphiniums in the hateful Latin affected by scientific gardeners—would be appreciated. Dolphin flowers are so called because of the wonderful colours the dying dolphin displays as he goes west.

Of all the wonders of a garden the greatest wonder is the power of perfume to recall memories of long ago. The scent of wallflower, of roses, of jasmine, of bergamot, of thyme, of mint, of mignonette, of honeysuckle, and of lavender,

brings back as no book or painting can recall the long, long thoughts of childhood. Nothing is known by scientists and experts about the fragrance of flowers. The atoms that produce so pleasant and so lasting an impression elude chemistry. Combinations of atoms that produce scent belong to the domain of the mathematician, but the secret of the smell of a flower has not yet been extorted from Dame Nature.

As the eyes grow dim, and memory fails, the joys of a garden increase. It may be that those brave men for whom this is written will understand why I have chosen to write about gardens, with their music, their freshness, their fragrance, their orderliness and their peace.

The Rt. Hon.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

AFTER

Sir Luke Fildes, R.A.

RIGHT HON. DAVID LLOYD GEORGE.

After Sir Luke Fildes, R.A.

PRAYER IN TIME OF WAR

BY

E. Nesbit

PRAYER IN TIME OF WAR.

By E. Nesbit.

Oh! dear fields of my country, hedges and lanes and meadows,
Hedges where wild rose blossoms, meadows where daisies grow,
Fields where the green corn shivers, lanes where the kindly shadows
Hide from unloving eyes the way that the lovers go. . . .
Still through the loud loom's clanging, under the tall mill's shadow,
Through dirt and noise of cities live old sweet sounds and sights:
Birds that sing in the copses, flowers that border the meadows,
Streams that tinkle and sprinkle leaves in the magic nights.

Here where the high elms circle ancient churchyards and meadows,
Fields where our fathers toiled, churchyards where now they sleep,
Lanes where our fathers sought the kind love-sheltering shadows,
And where each lies with his true love, quiet as dreams are deep.
Every meadow and tree calls to us now to befriend them,
Fields where our childhood played, fields where our children play,
Lanes where we walked with those who cry to our hearts to defend them—
England, my country, speak to each of your sons to-day!

Trampled and desecrate now are the foreign woodlands and meadows,
  Scarred with the flame of war the lanes where the Flamand wooed,
Dark is the Flemish land with fiendish implacable shadows;
  Greedy gorgons of guns stand there where the homesteads stood.
Not for our country alone, our darling, our mistress, our treasure,
  But for the Flemish home-land, loved of her noble sons,
And for the fields of France, our brother's glory and pleasure—
  God give us grace to face the shells and the gas, the guns!

For, oh! if their case were ours, if the green of our English meadows
  Were red with our children's blood, what should we hold back then?
If the light of our English fields were black with the German shadows,
  What would the world be worth to us who are English men?

Summer is soft and sweet in the downs and the woods and the meadows,
  Love calls soft from the lanes, with grain are the fields alight. . . .
God, give me nobler dreams, transfigure my heart's hid shadows,
  Make me Thy Knight, to fight for the Right in the light of Thy Might!

E. Nesbit

" BETTY "

BY

LEWIS BAUMER

" BETTY."

THE SEARCH.

By Beatrice Harraden.

It was about a week or so after the bombardment of Antwerp that an elderly couple, M. and Mme. S——, and their little granddaughter, Marie, found themselves domiciled in an English family in one of the suburbs of London. Everything was done to alleviate their sorrow and make them feel that they were more than welcome in this land, strange to them, it is true, yet now to be their home until Belgium had been freed from the German yoke. But their sadness could find no consolation whilst their other grandchild, Jeanne, was still missing. She had been swept from them in the panic and bewilderment of that tragic day, and her case was but one of the many agonies of the selfsame kind endured by heartbroken Belgian parents and relatives. Every inquiry was set on foot in England, both by the Belgian Refugee Committee and by their hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Smith. Little Jeanne, aged seventeen, fair, delicate, sensitive, dreamy, was nowhere to be traced amongst the refugees in England, nor, as far as could be learnt, amongst the refugees in Holland. She had disappeared; and those who loved her best hoped that a merciful death had overtaken her rather than a merciless dishonour.

But the old people grieved unceasingly. In the silence of the night, Peter Smith, the eldest son, whose bedroom was next to theirs, could hear the old lady sobbing out the

name of little Jeanne. It got on his nerves first. He became irritable, and entirely disagreeable to his parents, his friends and himself. Then it got into his heart; and the irritability passed gradually into a secret and settled determination to go in search of that missing little Jeanne, to rout amongst the Dutch refugee settlements, and make sure that she was not there. Peter did not believe much in Red Tape. Red Tape said a man was dead, and behold he turned up; Red Tape said little Jeanne was not to be found, and why shouldn't she turn up? Well, he would have a try. And if he failed, no one would know anything more except that having had no summer holiday, he had asked for his outing in December, and gone to Holland. And if he succeeded, well, he'd return with little Jeanne. That was simple enough as a plan.

It was not so simple in practice. But he moved mountains, got leave, secured letters of introduction, and what was more valuable than anything else, a personal interview with one of the representatives of the American Commission for Relief in Belgium; and, to make a long story short, he landed in Holland and began his search.

In Flushing no one had heard of little Jeanne S——. He passed amongst the refugees there, and visited a huge railway shed in which hundreds of men, women and children were herded together without privacy of any kind, and without any precautions for health and *morale*. This was the last remaining "mixed" camp, the Dutch having been continuously and indefatigably engaged in dealing with the proper sheltering and housing and feeding of the thousands of Belgians who had overwhelmed the country in their vast numbers. And the next week this camp, too, was to be broken up, and separated into families, and suitable groups. But meantime it was a terrible spectacle of misery and

degradation. Peter, turning away with a shudder, was almost glad that no one answering to little Jeanne's description was to be found there.

Then a Canadian journalist, with whom he had foregathered, and who had planned to write about the refugee camps, suggested that Peter should go with him to Rotterdam, and thence to Rosendaal and Bergen-op-Zoom; and by this time Peter had become keenly interested not only in the search for his little unknown friend, but in the whole question of the refugees, and the terrible burden of responsibility so bravely and generously borne by the kind Dutch, who were doing everything in their power to cope with the colossal task. He laughed when he thought of our Belgian refugee problem in England. As compared with the immensity and complexity of the situation in Holland, it simply didn't exist.

At Rosendaal the refugees were quartered in a huge building which had once been a granary. At the time when Peter and his friend arrived, the people were crowded together in a large room on the ground floor, waiting for dinner. So he went amongst them with the Commandant and a woman overseer, who did all in their power to help him; but no trace could he find of little Jeanne. There were babies and little children and aged women and young wives and young women; but no one answered to the name of Jeanne S——, nor to her description. Then Peter was taken upstairs to an enormous loft, to the sleeping and living quarters, where separate arrangements had been made for the men and women, and special care was being taken to give each family a private little compartment of its own. Before leaving, he looked into the dining-room to say good-bye, to greet an old white-haired woman, to speak a few broken Flemish words

here and there, and shake hands with tiny children who were bidden to "gi polk" (give the hand). The Commandant, a very kind Dutch officer, told Peter almost with tears in his eyes that there were no toys for the children—not a single toy—except one old rag rabbit that was a rabbit no longer! Peter and his friend reported this sad fact to the American Commission for Relief, and very soon a consignment of toys from the Santa Claus ship "Jason" reached the Rosendaal settlement. And it cheered him when he heard the news. For the sight of those homeless, stunned exiles, hounded from their own country, with no hopes, no prospects, no occupation, and no toys even for the little children, haunted him day and night. He wondered how the old frail women had survived the terrible exodus from Belgium into Holland, the shock of bombardment, the tragedy of the scenes, the physical fatigue. Yet they had survived somehow. And very dignified was their bearing, and very brave and uncomplaining were their brief remarks.

"We have the little ones safe," they said, pointing to the little heads around them.

That seemed to sum up everything for them.

After Rosendaal, Peter and the Canadian journalist put in a day or two at Rotterdam, and by way of change from these scenes of sadness, saw the Food Relief ships arriving from Canada and the United States, and watched the barges destined for Liège, Antwerp, Malines, Brussels, Namur and elsewhere being loaded with their cargoes of rice, flour, salt, beans, peas, wheat and condensed milk. They dashed about, too, up and down the River Maas, in and out of the different harbours, conveyed hither and thither by a little steam launch flying the American flag of the Commission for Relief.

Then, one day, in company with two members of the Commission, who were in any case going there, they motored to Bergen-op-Zoom, and were on the very road where the avalanche of refugees had in their first terror broken away from Belgium into Holland. Bergen-op-Zoom, the city of camps, produced a much happier effect on Peter than any refugee quarters he had yet seen. It was situate on high ground carefully chosen by the military for this very reason. The sight of the thousands of tents was exceedingly picturesque. The children seemed free and happy, and it was evident that they were getting here a good chance of health and growth. Some of the tents were nicely kept and surrounded by some attempt at a sand garden. Most of them had a fire, and the families gathered together round it were evidently thankful to have their own private corner. In several Peter saw the family refugee dog, quite content and proprietary! The tents were for the most part the abode of the better class. They could take their choice of the tents or the barracks; but most chose the tents because of the privacy. The second class of refugees on the whole preferred the one-storied barracks, which were arranged in partitions for separate families, two or three families being quartered in each building. The barracks, were steaming hot and close, but none the less popular for that.

The third grade of refugees were housed, chiefly by their own desire, in one huge tent, like an enormous circus tent, with separate little establishments not screened off at all: a communal life, in fact; and these people actually had their own Burgomaster. All the separate little fires and the lights, and the groups of people presented a very curious and interesting sight, like a scene out of a play. There were little pathways and roads arranged, as in a toy village. The

refugees in this quarter looked positively happy, though, of course, here and there sat solitary figures, numbed and hopeless and dazed.

The fourth grade were housed in caravans, and these were separated off from the rest of the community by barbed wire: a sorry spectacle, though probably an unavoidable one, since these refugees belonged to the lower depths of social life, and precautions had to be taken even in these sad times. Bath houses were being erected, and a school house, library and church were in contemplation. And there was a building set apart where the mothers nursing their babies went for milk and white bread. A doctor and a nurse were in attendance all day long. This department was run and financed by an outside committee, with the consent of the military authorities.

All this Peter saw, and much more. He learnt, too, that all the concentration camps were now on the model of Bergen-op-Zoom; and he, as many others who have had the chance of studying the refugee question in Holland, was profoundly impressed by the kindness, resourcefulness and deep sense of responsibility with which the splendid little Dutch nation accepted its duty towards a stricken neighbour.

But no success whatsoever had attended his search for little Jeanne. And the more he learnt of the overwhelming tragedy of Belgium, the less he expected that any search for any missing girl member of a family could possibly have happy results. Little Jeanne had disappeared. For once Red Tape had been right. Red Tape had said there was no record of her—and that was the end of it. Or would have been, but for a curious and unexpected chance.

Peter's leave was up. He parted most reluctantly from the group of war workers amongst whom he had moved with

that easy comradeship and instant friendliness born of a world crisis. It had been a thrilling time, and his mind was crammed full to overflowing with memories of the scenes he had witnessed and the people he had met, for that letter to the American Commission for Relief in Belgium had taken him into the very arena of war-work activity in Rotterdam. Sea captains, shipping agents, refugees, American business men, Salvation Army workers, journalists, writers of books, spies—what a jumble! But always at the back of his brain the haunting thought of a nation hounded out of its thousands of homes, dispossessed, desecrated, outraged.

"My God," he said to himself, "*if such a fate should overtake my country.*"

It was borne in on him then and there that he must throw up his post and enlist.

Well, he had reached Flushing, and was taking a meal at the Zeeland Hotel before going on board, when a young woman, bright and attractive in appearance, but at this moment evidently greatly overcome by some emotion, came and sat at his table, where there was the only vacant seat in the room. She pushed her food away, and leaned back in the chair.

"I can't manage it," she said involuntarily. "I'm so upset with what I've seen this evening. I can't forget it." She broke off, glanced at Peter, was reassured by his kind face, and went on:

"In all my work here amongst the refugees I've never seen anything to beat the desolation of that little last remaining group in the hold of the barge, and that young girl rocking herself to and fro, and moaning softly. You can't imagine how it has torn my heart. Gone wrong in the head, you know—her memory gone—alone—lost—no one

knowing who she is and where she comes from. We thought she belonged to the people with her. But she doesn't. So young and gentle and shrinking—and absolutely alone. I'm going to ask the Committee to let me have her. I can't leave her there. I simply can't."

Peter bent forward suddenly.

"Look here," he said eagerly. "I want to go to that barge. And I'll tell you why. I must go to it. You'll see for yourself I must."

And he told her the story of little Jeanne, and of those old people mourning for their lost one in his mother's home in Dulwich. She scarcely waited to hear his name, to glance at his card, to look at his credentials. She signed to him to follow, and led him in the dark along the railway lines towards some sheds, and then further down to an office where she knocked up an official, a Dutchman of course, who seemed charmed to do her bidding. He brought a lantern, and guided the way to the wharf, whence they clambered on to a barge, groped their way over it somehow, and landed on to a second barge which she told Peter had brought five thousand refugees from Antwerp on the day of the bombardment. They descended into the hold. And there in a corner Peter saw about nine or ten people, several women of varying ages, and three or four men. A lamp lit up the dreary darkness and showed a young girl sitting alone hugging her knees and moaning. She stopped for a moment as the visitors entered, looked at them with unseeing eyes—and continued her plaint. She was young and fair. If she had once been pretty and charming, there was now no trace of good looks on her bewildered face. But her wild appearance and her posture of despair would have touched the hardest heart by its unconscious appeal of pathos.

Could this be little Jeanne? And how was Peter to know? He stood by her in great perplexity, and spoke the name of her little sister Marie Henriette. But she gave no sign of interest or recognition. Then he tried her own name, Jeanne S——. Still there was no sign. Then he spoke the name of the street in Antwerp where Jeanne's grandparents lived. For one almost imperceptible moment she left off moaning. But Peter's companion, alert, intent as only a woman can be with sympathies aroused, saw a slight change of expression on her face. And she whispered:

"Try something more. Try anything you can think of. It doesn't matter what it is—any trifle—any detail."

Peter shook his head. He had nothing else to try. And it struck him that he had been a fool to come on such an errand equipped with such meagre items of identification. Why on earth hadn't he told the old people? By Jove, what an ass he'd been. Better have risked their disappointment than have missed this chance. But, suddenly, he thought of the name of the dog which Jeanne's little sister Marie was always bewailing. 'Fido' was the name. And Peter had the wonderful inspiration to call it out in a perfectly natural manner, as if he were in very truth summoning the dog.

"*Fido, Fido, Fido,*" he cried.

And then a miracle took place. The moaning ceased. The girl got up, advanced a few steps, looked around, and called out:

"Fido, Fido, Fido,"

Then she burst into tears.

That was all they had to go on. But Peter's unknown woman comrade, who was herself one of the group of refugee organisers, and therefore part of the Red Tape, technically, though not spiritually, laid the case before her Committee;

and the end of it all was that she was allowed to ship the girl over to England, provided that she herself took responsibility for her. She said, of course, she would. And if the old people in Peter's home were not the girl's relatives, then she would find her a suitable haven through the London Committee, and watch over her welfare. But leave her there alone and desolate, she could not and would not.

So they brought her over, and Peter went to fetch the old Belgian couple whilst his comrade stayed with the girl in one of the Belgian Hostels in London.

She proved to be little Jeanne, in very truth, and as the weeks went on her mind and memory returned, and the past misery was blotted out. Peter had the joy of seeing the successive changes in her when he came back to his home for his occasional hours of leave. For he had immediately enlisted on his return. He could not rest until he had done so. The scenes he had witnessed had made a deep impression on him, and he said, over and over again:

"*My God, if such a fate should overtake my country.*"

Eight months later Peter was killed at Ypres, one of the many thousands of heroes, unnamed in despatches, unknown, undistinguished, yet helping to make an imperishable record of our country's honour.

Beatrice Harraden

LIKE SOULS IMMORTAL

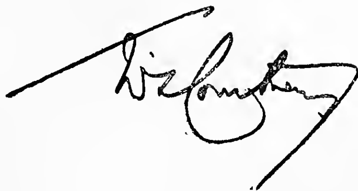
BY

W. L. Courtney

LIKE SOULS IMMORTAL.

Is God's Hand shortened that He cannot save ?
  Or sleeps the cry of anguish in His Ear ?
  Nay, but He sees and hearkens. Have no fear.
Ask those who fight and perish, ask the brave
Who, unrepining, squander all they have
  For some high promise, unaccomplished here :
  God's glorious gates of Paradise shine clear
When human hopes are faltering to the grave.

Strange world, in which the triumph does not come
  To those who are most worldly, but to those
    Who muse apart, and wiser than they seem,
Like souls immortal everywhere at home,
  Learn of the God Who sees, the God Who knows,
    The hidden truth interpreting their dream.



TWO LITTLE FABLES

BY

BARRY PAIN

TWO LITTLE FABLES.

I.

The Poet wrote a song, making out of the suffering of his own heart his message to the world.

The Man of Business read it, and shook his head. For there was no money in it.

The Man of Action was busy with a machine-gun, and could not be bothered with poetry.

The Scholar pointed out that the song did not conform to the best classical examples, and contained metrical defects.

The Ordinary Man took pride and pleasure in saying that he could not make head or tail of the song.

And then the Poet found a blue-eyed Maiden, who knew nothing of money, or machine-guns, or pedantic rules, and had not yet lived long enough to have become quite ordinary; and to her he read his song. "And what do you think of it, little girl?" he asked.

"Well, speaking frankly, rot!" said the little girl.

Moral: *The fact that your work is greeted with general neglect or disapproval does not necessarily mean that the other people are wrong.*

II.

There was once a Great King who devised a test by which he might know which out of three maidens he should marry. To each maiden he gave a handful of sapphires.

The first said: "This is very kind of you. Many thanks."

The second said: "This is too sweet of you. And if I only had a few diamonds to put with them, they would make a lovely necklace."

The third sadly and gently put the precious stones from her. "I do not need such things," she said in a soft and ecstatic purr. "All that I ask of life is love."

So the King, who knew enough to come in when it rained, married the first of the three.

MORAL: *In a life-partner affectation is almost as undesirable as greediness.*

Barry Pain

JOAN ATTENDS A FIRST-NIGHT PERFORMANCE.

BY KEBLE HOWARD.

I WAS standing in the foyer, watching the long line of streaming cabs and carriages. The white, wet mackintoshes of the coachmen and footmen glistened dismally beneath the electric light. The sleek women and puffy men, as they hurried from their broughams into the theatre, looked peevishly from beneath wrinkled brows. Everybody told everybody that the night was horribly wet, not so much because the speakers were searching after a reputation for originality as that everybody insisted on being recognised by everybody.

The hubbub was still at its height when a white-clad figure came rushing down the pavement and hurled itself —satin shoes, silk cape and all—into the foyer. It was, of course, my cousin.

"Good heavens!" I cried. "You don't mean to say you've run all the way?"

Joan, panting hard, shook her head. "Only about a hundred yards!" she gasped.

"A hundred yards on a night like this! What on earth did you do that for, you stupid child?"

"I was afraid I should be late. We got into a sort of line, and just crept and crept along in a simply maddening manner. So at last I thought the only

thing to do was to jump out and run, and here I am. Don't be cross, please!"

Two large brown eyes, half-laughing, half-pleading, looked up into mine. I pressed my lips together, and tried to persuade myself that I looked stern.

"Are your feet wet?"

"Not a bit! These shoes are much thicker than they look. It hasn't begun, has it?"

"Not yet. Do you not think you had better go and put your hair straight?"

"Does it look very untidy?"

It looked glorious, but I wasn't going to say so. Dignity, I remembered, must be maintained at all costs.

"Not particularly. Come along."

The stalls and boxes, as we entered, were alive with diamonds, swaying fans, and smiles. The dress circle, as bravely as might be, reflected the stalls, and the upper circle, dimly enough, reflected the dress circle. The real enthusiasts were in the pit and gallery.

Wholly unconscious of men that stared and women that levelled glasses, Joan-o'-the-Meadows slipped into her seat and began eagerly to look round.

"Show me the celebrities," she demanded.

"There aren't any."

Her face fell. "Not one?"

"Depends upon what you call a celebrity."

"I call everybody a celebrity that I've ever heard of. Do point them out."

I pulled myself together and managed to find for her some half-dozen titled folk, a few musicians, a novelist or two, a barrister, a cricketer, and several dramatic critics. From peeress to pressman, my cousin gazed at them

long and eagerly. I am inclined to think, however, that she found the cricketer the most fascinating.

"He made ninety-six against Middlesex last week," she informed me.

"Indeed?"

"Of course. Didn't you read about it? And he's quite high up in the batting averages. I'm awfully glad I've seen him close to; aren't you?"

"Awfully."

A pause. She was studying the profile of a gentleman whose historical romances gladden the heart of many a country cousin, and keep the counters of local libraries well polished.

"Like him?" I asked.

Joan drew her brows together. "I'm not sure," she replied. "He's not quite what I pictured him."

"Poor man! But you mustn't leave off reading his books."

"Of course not. All the same, it's a pity authors don't look as nice as cricketers, isn't it?"

I was about to remind her that the difference in the conditions of life might have something to do with the matter when the lights went down, the curtain went up, and the pit, noisily self-assertive, bade us keep silence.

The piece was a musical comedy, and began with the customary swishing of petticoats. My cousin, I noticed, was trying her best to distinguish the words, and eyed me distrustfully when I assured her that they didn't really matter.

The opening chorus having been brought to an unsatisfactory conclusion, a well-proportioned, breathless young lady stepped into the middle of the stage and

explained the situation. It was evident that the other young ladies took little or no interest in the matter. Those of them, indeed, who didn't happen to have friends in the audience were busily engaged in arranging their skirts.

"What lovely girls!" whispered Joan.

"Which?"

"All of them. I wish you wouldn't pretend to be so superior."

"I'm not."

"Not what?"

"Not pretending to be."

"You mean that you are superior."

"No, I don't. I mean that——"

"Shut up!" growled the pit, and we did.

The performance about this time was a good deal interrupted by the arrivals of the principals. In accordance with custom and their contracts, they came on one by one, and each entrance, of course, stirred a different portion of the house to enthusiasm. As nearly as I could calculate, the act was more than half over before we had worked through our ovations.

"It must be nice to be so popular," shouted my cousin. The leading comedian was bowing and smiling, one hand on his heart and the other behind his back.

"Ripping!" I roared.

"Is he going to be very funny?" she shrieked.

"In six weeks' time," I bellowed.

The piece, jerkily enough, proceeded. For my part, I took but little note of it. I was watching Joan's face, and the puzzled, wondering expressions that chased each other across those honest features. Sometimes, when a

cockney vulgarism was received with boisterous approval, she would glance at me swiftly from the corners of those splendid eyes. Once, I fear, she caught me yawning. The mistake did not occur again, however, so that my persistent merriment added to her bewilderment.

At the end of the first act the bravest of the men fought their way into the corridors, while the women arranged themselves in pairs and chattered. Few of them thought it worth while to discuss the piece. They were content to take it, good or bad, as a matter of course. Not so with Joan-o'-the-Meadows.

"I can't quite follow the plot," she confided. "Why should the person who left ten thousand a year to the heroine insist on the heroine becoming a Suffragette?"

"Oh, just to make it funny."

"But it's so silly! Anyone who made a will like that must have been out of his mind when he made it, and so the will wouldn't count."

"Of course not. I don't suppose they thought of that."

"And then there's another thing. Why do all those girls keep on doing such odd things with their arms and hands and heads? They'd look much prettier if they were simply natural."

"My dear Joan," I expostulated, "you don't understand. That constant movement is very important nowadays, and a clever gentleman has been specially engaged to think out those fascinating attitudes and teach them to the beautiful ladies in the lovely dresses."

"I don't care," my cousin retorted. "It would be much nicer if the girls were more natural."

The second and third acts were rather like the first,

but sadder. The usual uproar took place at the fall of the final curtain, the gallery and the management vieing with each other as to which should provide the better after-entertainment for the remainder of the house.

"At any rate," I protested, as the brougham splashed homewards, "you can't say you haven't been to a first night."

"No," said Joan. And then, after a moment's hesitation, she added, "Thank you very much, cousin Kenneth."

Keble Howard.

L

THE PERSONAL EQUATION

BY

F. H. Townsend

THE PERSONAL EQUATION.

Nervous Old Lady: "Young man, will you kindly pull down that blind, in case a Zepp. sees us?"

Facing p. 180.

A GIPSY ENCAMPMENT

BY

FRANK BRANGWYN, R.I.

A GIPSY ENCAMPMENT [By Frank Brangwyn, R.A.]

THE DREAMING KNIGHT.

By A. C. Benson.

At *Reepham*, in *Norfolk*, there is an inconspicuous church, which few travellers go to see, because of the two magnificent churches of *Cawston* and *Salle*—pronounced like Saul—close by, miniature cathedrals, with their painted screens, rich woodwork, timbered roofs, set down for some undiscovered reason—perhaps only for the glory of God—in tiny pastoral hamlets; and so *Reepham* escapes notice. Yet there is at *Reepham* one of the most beautiful monuments in England, the tomb of Sir Roger de Kerdeston, who died in 1337, a work of art which is almost the last word of the Middle Ages!

The designer of this tomb must have been a man of deeply poetical mind. He threw away all convention, and instead of depicting the knight in the usual fashion, stiffly extended, with strong hands just pressed together in prayer, a cushion under his head, and perhaps a faithful dog at his feet, he chose to represent him with arms crossed, and one mailed leg over the other, asleep, awaiting the battle, on a bed of large stones. The utter restfulness of the great wearied figure, who had fought perhaps all through the day, and has laid himself down to bivouac, making a pillow for himself, like Jacob on the bare hill of *Luz*, out of the stones of the place, is infinitely noble and suggestive. He sleeps like a tired child, his armour still laced about him, ready to

rise and fight again as soon as the dawn comes up and the trumpet sounds over the dewy field.

This mysterious piece of mediæval realism has, so far as I know, no counterpart; it is an attempt to get back to life through art, to present a thing seen, rather than a thing imagined. But its very freshness and spontaneity seems to be a symbol of something new dawning on the world, a new order, which is to set the ancient order aside.

It stands for the end of the old romance, of a world with half its mysteries uninterpreted and unexplored, a place of marvellous surprises and adventures, in which almost anything seemed possible, and when the curtain screening life and life's laws had not been lifted. He is waiting, that wearied knight, for the dawn of a new knowledge, which has ever since been making the world not less wonderful or mysterious, but certainly less bewildering and surprising. Science was to achieve marvels which the most potent magic had failed to bring about, the laboratory was to transform the earth, the printing-press was to multiply knowledge; labour and order and peace were to gain ground, century by century, and a life both fuller and richer was to rise out of the ashes of the old.

And yet if the old romance was about to die, with its chivalry and its high-hearted adventures, and with all its misery and wretchedness, too, it was not to be an extinction or even a decay of its forces; the force was but to run in different channels. Because with all our knowledge of what is happening in nature, all our binding of nature's powers to serve our turn, we are still as much in the dark, indeed more in the dark than ever, about the ultimate mysteries. We have no idea how we come to be alive, or what death means; we know nothing of the strange force of passion and

love which draws human beings together still, and overleaps all obstacles. It may be possible indeed that the same sort of order of life as we have seen in the world's history may be evolving itself in millions of planets in space, each globe with a history and a development of its own. All this is dark to us; but it seems as though science, in maiming superstition, in destroying the old possibilities of wonder, had but brought within our range a far vaster and more intricate mystery; it has limited miracle, in fact, but increased amazement, by showing us that life as it is, as it remains to be lived, is a far larger and deeper thing than any private fancy, and lovelier than any clash of minstrelsy. So that the old knight, who sleeps so hard and chill upon the stones of the wold, has but opened his eyes upon a statelier pageant than ever he saw before, whether he flashed and thundered in the onset, with the castle-towers staring grimly over the bastion, or rode silken-scarved and robed with one whom he loved, among the thorn-thickets on a May morning.

If one could but find words to say clearly how far richer and stranger life is now than it was then, in all its peaceful concourse, its high-built cities, its infinite combinations, its very battles and tumults, one would do a greater deed than any knight of old. For the thing is all there, staring us in the face, entreating us, crying out urgently to be perceived, with a myriad of voices both loud and sweet. And yet the poet and the dreamer turn away their eyes, and look back regretfully to the old dim days, forgetting all the fears and narrownesses, the brutalities and horrors. Because in those days the battle was so insistent, the pressure of life so hard, that the sage and the poet, and even the lover, if he was not a man of prowess, were hunted out of it into monasteries and colleges, fortresses of quiet, into a sad routine of prayers and

gossip. But now romance, by which I mean a certain fineness and glow of life, can come to us anywhere and everywhere, in office and villa and country cottage. We do not all want it, it is true, because our hearts are set on the wrong things, and we do not all recognise it when we see it; but it is there for all that, the wonder and greatness of life, looking through disasters and toil, and reaching out like the sunset glow beyond the rim of the dusky world. That is the new gift, the art of life, once possessed by so few, now freely handed to all. That is the change that has overtaken the world, since the dust of carved stone was brushed from the new-made shrine at *Reepham* six centuries ago.

A BELGIAN LADY

BY

GUY THORNE

A BELGIAN LADY—SEEN IN THE STRAND.

By Guy Thorne.

Her lips were pale carnation,
  Her hair was sable brown;
She was of Flanders Nation,
  And walked in London Town.

She came from silent spaces
  Of trees and water-flowers,
Where in grey market-places
  Carillons chime the hours.

Old Bruges and Antwerp City,
  She saw it all again;
Her eyes were dim with pity—
  Remembering Louvain.

She wept, this lonely daughter
  Of sorrow and dark days,
For the sweet Bruges Minné-Water
  With swans upon its ways.

Guy Thorne

PRAYER

BY

Evelyn Underhill

PRAYER.

BY EVELYN UNDERHILL.

WHEN the soul yields to prayer,
The gate made of jacinth
Swings, stands ajar ;
Scents out of heavenly places
Storm the sad air
On the gale that blows in the unmeasured spaces
Which link star to star :
Eyes shut to the landscape here where we are
Open elsewhere
When the soul yields to prayer.

The soul deep in prayer
Is a hyacinth
Stretching forth from its pillar of bloom
Feelers of fragrance unseen
To the edge of the room—
So, held still and serene,
Of its outpouring gift unaware,
With radiance redeeming the gloom,
With sweetness assaulting the air,
Is the soul deep in prayer.

In the triumph of prayer
Two-fold is the spell.
With the folding of hands
There's a spreading of wings

And the soul's lifted up to invisible lands
And ineffable peace. Yet it knows, being there,
That it's close to the heart of all piteous things ;
And it loses and finds, and it gives and demands,
For its life is divine, it must love, it must share
In the triumph of prayer.

In the anguish of prayer
It is well ! it is well !
Then only the victory of love is complete
When the soul on the Cross
Dies to all save its loss ;
When in utmost defeat
The light that was fair
And the Friend who was sweet
Flee away, then the truth of its love is laid bare
In the anguish of prayer.

THE BLIND

BY

T. P. O'Connor

THE BLIND

BY T. P. O'CONNOR

How many things there are in this world which we fail to realise, and by failing to realise, fail to help. It is an old but an ever-true saying that half the world does not know how the other half live. This was brought home to me one evening in the House of Commons when my friend, Mr. Wardle, brought forward a motion with regard to the position of the blind in this country. It was quite by accident that I was present at the debate, for it came on unexpectedly and by a series of unexpected circumstances. It was perhaps even more of an accident that I took part in the debate.

Just two or three days before, I had received a message from my old friend, Mr. C. Arthur Pearson, asking me to come and see him. I had not seen him for many years, and in the interval there had come upon him the disastrous calamity of an almost complete loss of sight. I need not say how touched I was when I found myself again in the presence of a man who was energy—restless, inexhaustible, all embracing—personified, and found him now with all the energy there still, but dependent for even the smallest things on the help of others. And yet I cannot say this meeting with my old friend was at all sad—indeed, I went away rather cheered than otherwise. For I had been brought into contact with heroism and all that heroism can teach. Instead of being depressed, listless,

indifferent to the world and its doings, Mr. Pearson was animated, hopeful, incessantly active, more interested in life than ever. For his own misfortune had aroused his sympathy with those who had suffered the same disaster, and into the work of taking care of the blind he had diverted all the bounding energy which he had hitherto employed in building up his own business. And no pioneer even of this good work for the blind will complain, I think, if I say that the introduction of Mr. Pearson's vivid, inspiring, and energetic personality has worked transformation in the whole problem.

It was while I was still under the influence of this strange meeting that I heard Mr. Wardle set forth the case of the British blind. What a shameful and humiliating story it was—seven thousand begging, five thousand in workhouses, three thousand partially and poorly employed. I could scarcely restrain my indignant protest against such a gross act of neglect by one of the most powerful and wealthy and also generous of nations to the most afflicted of its citizens.

Then came the War. The problem assumed quite a new and even more appealing aspect. For now we had blindness inflicted, not by the indifferent hand of Nature but by the hand of man, and inflicted on those who had gone forth to do battle for our liberties and our existence. Here again I had, through Mr. Pearson, the opportunity of realising the dreadful tragedy by being brought in contact with some of the poor blinded soldiers whom he had taken under his beneficent charge. He gathered them around me—and I made them a little address, though indeed I rarely found it so hard to make an address. As the saying goes, my heart was in my mouth and I could scarcely command my words. I felt more like weeping than speaking, from sheer overflow of feeling at once of pity and of gratitude, for I stood before the men who

had suffered that I and millions of others like me might live in peace in our own land.

Thus it was that I came into intimate contact with the problem of the blind. I am asked to add a few words to those that have come from many other pens to this volume published for their benefit. I do so gladly, for there is no work more sacred, none more patriotic, none a more palpable duty to all of us in this dreadful time of war than that of taking care of our blinded soldiers. Let us give—give—give yet again—that these stricken ones may be afforded the opportunity to find in work, for which they require training, not merely a livelihood but that liberation from care and brooding, so that they may realise that the world has still a place for them and a heart for them and a sympathy for them, which is as inexhaustible as the generosity of a generous nation

THE WITCH

BY

CHARLES FOLKARD

THE WITCH.

[*Kindly lent by Mrs. Bobbie Robertson.*

AT THE CRISIS OF LIFE.

By Sir Laurence Gomme.

During the crisis that is working itself out now, it seems to me that the springs of human existence are so tense that every feeling and attribute are magnified—the greatness and the littleness of us, the hopes and the fears, the looking backward and the looking forward, the real and the ideal, even the imaginative and the creative. And if this is a right conclusion to have drawn it follows that moments like the present have one great lesson for all humanity, namely, that life is a serious responsibility. Life comes to us without knowledge on our part and death arrives without knowledge, and between the two events there is something we call life. We take to it for the most part casually and carelessly. We fit in with our environment without question or comment. We subscribe to the religion of our fathers; we follow the usual moral rules in more or less strictness. And as religion and morality change with the centuries we accept the changes without hesitation, and the complacency is carried on one generation further on. I hope this is not an unfair estimate of ordinary life in the western world. I know it is appalling and quite unworthy of the experience which is ours if we would but seek it.

There are so many great things to do in the world. Science works its way within a century to an enormous

result, and we use it to hurtle shot and shell at each other. We cannot spell even the elements of religion. Just now a stupid discussion is going on in the papers on the subject of religion, and the war and Christianity is being tossed to and fro between the disputants without an effort to understand the position held by Christianity among the religions of the world. The Christianity that is being invoked is not the teaching of Christ. It is the derelict paganism of the old world plus the sayings of the greatest of all teachers. And they don't agree in combination. They allow the German Emperor and those who think with him to call forsooth upon the God of battles as his peculiar and special duty. He walks with the Deity. He has treasured moments with Him And when this Deity is examined it is merely the colossal ego of the man—every muscle and fibre of Wilhelm II. is extended until it reaches beyond the real and then it is given a place in the heavens where the gods do dwell. What the German Emperor does on the big scale, each one of us does on a small scale, and we think of the God of the Christians as every people have thought of the gods of their worship. In the meantime the teaching of the Great Teacher is dead within us. The gospel of love, preached for the first time in the history of humanity, lies buried beneath the theology that has been heaped over it.

This may be a hard saying. It comes from the stress of things. It is in direct contrast to the true conditions. There is a place in the world for all of us and for all our faculties. If we are weak in one we are strong in others, and the whole burden of life is thrown upon the strongest faculties. The real tragedy is that we do not always know where lies the weakness and where the strength, except of course when it is expressed in physical unfitness.

One does not know whether modern civilisation will bear the strain of present thought or whether having produced its Shakespeares, its Darwins, and its hosts in physical science, it will crumble up as the older civilisations crumbled. We did not follow on from the glories of Greece and Rome. We went back for generations and are only just now coming into line with all that antiquity had accomplished. The question is, Shall we dissipate our chances? And the answer comes perhaps from the present wave of enforced seriousness in our lives which may make us think less of the make-believe and more of the reality of what is before each one of us at the moment when we reckon up the place that is ours in the world.

These are only rough jottings from my study, thoughts which arise whether I will or no, and if they help others to think, even if it is to think differently, the end of this small contribution to the Gift Book will have been met. It may help even those afflicted with blindness to realise that there is more to do with one's life than to see the material side of the world, even the beautiful side—there is the eternal question, ever put by man during his long existence: What part do I play in the universe?

Laurence Gomme

"BECAUSE THEY SEEING, SEE NOT"

BY

A. Burfield

"BECAUSE THEY SEEING, SEE NOT."

By A. Burfield.

Mr. Josiah Brindlescombe had for twenty years or so conducted his business in South Audley Street with fair success. He had made enough to give his sons a first-rate education, and this seemed to him to atone for some slight deficiencies in his own upbringing of which he was conscious.

It was a matter for self-congratulation that his eldest son was now serving as a lieutenant at the Front. An army career had been made possible for Eric by his liberal help. Thank God, he ruminated, Eric was able to volunteer for active service. He had not been girded at by verse of a sort in the public press, nor had he had to respond to the exhortation to enlist shrieking at him from the screen of every taxi. It was just like them, these journalist versifiers and disreputable taxi-drivers, inducing other men to do what they wouldn't do themselves!

Which shows, in the first case, that Mr. Brindlescombe was either unfamiliar with Tennyson's lines:

> "The song that nerves a nation's heart
> Is in itself a deed,"

or that he didn't agree with their sentiment, or that present-day war-songs did not reach that category!

In the second case, it was Mr. Brindlescombe's opinion

that taxi-drivers were scarcely worth a thought. They and their cabs were an unmitigated nuisance, he would say on occasion, forgetful of the fact that a goodly proportion of his custom reached him through their agency. But . . . give a dog a bad name. . . .

It was his invariable habit at the end of the day's work to walk down to Stanhope Gate, and thus cut through the Park to St. George's Hospital. No variation of weather deterred him. Winter and summer alike it was his wont.

From there he boarded a bus to Sheen. He reached his home with undeviating regularity. Nothing had happened through all those years in his journeyings to and fro to disturb the serenity, the eventless monotony of them. The providence which looks after sailors and drunken men, children and fools, had also found time to keep a guardian eye on automata like the Mr. Brindlescombes of the world.

But at last something did happen. Mr. Brindlescombe arrived home fifteen minutes late one November evening, in a state of considerable perturbation. He thrust his silk hat and attaché case, both smothered with mud, into the hands of the astonished maid, who was staggered at the spectacle presented by her usually decorous master. He had left his umbrella in the porch, as it was too dissipated looking to deserve its customary position in the hall stand.

The maid thought, though she was too well trained and discreet to give utterance to her thought, that he looked in a pickle. She imagined that a recrudescence of the Boer war mafficking had manifested itself in the present campaign.

Mr. Brindlescombe brushed past her brusquely and entered the room in which his wife was waiting. She did not raise her eyes from the heel of a sock upon which she was engaged with her capable hands. He broke forthwith into an incoherent explanation of the reason of his lateness. So agitated was he that her apparent inattention passed unnoticed.

"My dear," he exclaimed, "I've had a most narrow shave of being killed. It's a d—disgrace that taxis are allowed to drive in the reckless way they do. The authorities ought to make more drastic regulations as to the s—speed of these inf—fernal things. One's not safe anywhere nowadays." He gasped, then proceeded excitedly. "I was running to catch my b—bus, when I fell in avoiding a taxi which appeared from God knows where. It's—it's a s—scandal that they should be allowed to make a race track of the public streets——"

"But do they make a race track of the streets?" she enquired, pertinently.

He looked at her in amazement. The frigid tone of her voice, the look of estrangement in her eyes, and her expressed doubt of him, astounded him.

She paused, as if the effort she was about to make was extremely repugnant to her. Then she continued. "I saw all that happened to you, Josiah. I was in the taxi. My ride up to South Audley Street was punctuated by a succession of similar incidents, of which yours was the culmination. I had only too strong reason for noticing these elements of tragedy. You did not come out of the incident very creditably at the time. You are only making matters worse by your misrepresentation of the facts."

"My misrep——" he interjected.

"Your lies, then," she broke in, sternly. "Let me give my version of the incident. You darted from the pavement to the refuge without so much as a glance for approaching traffic. Despite the fact that half a dozen other people were waiting for a lull before continuing the crossing, you dashed across in your insane preoccupation to catch your 'bus. Realisation came when the taxi swerved and missed you, and you fell by your own momentum. The taxi had stopped. It was only the weight of opinion to the contrary of the onlookers that checked you from giving the driver in charge for furious driving. It never occurred to you to have the decency to thank him for saving your life, or at least saving you from serious injury.

"Furious driving," she repeated, with an access of scorn. "Can you realise that we had been held up by the police controls three times, and had taken five minutes coming only from Hamilton Place to the spot where you couldn't wait a fifth of a second?"

There was supreme contempt in her tone as she continued. "I've just dismissed the driver. He referred to the affair, not knowing who you were. He said your sprawling attitude had something of the brute in it, something Calibanesque. You had stripped yourself of all semblance of human dignity. You had not developed the reasoning faculty which two thousand years of civilisation ought to have inculcated in you; nor had you retained the primal instinct of the savage for self-preservation. You were neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring.

"It's not very flattering to have one's husband

classified thus by a taxi-driver, however perspicacious he may be."

"B—but what b—business had you in a taxi?" blustered Mr. Brindlescombe, in a voice which strove but failed lamentably to assume a masterfulness he far from felt at that juncture.

"I—I was in the taxi," she replied, in a passionless voice, "because I was bringing you news that Eric had been awarded the Victoria Cross——"

"Good lad, Eric!" broke in Mr. Brindlescombe ecstatically. "It's only what I expected of him. You don't seem gratified," he added, wonderingly.

"Gratified? Ah! Y—es. But——" She recovered herself, but a sob escaped her as she continued. "He succeeded in blowing up a bridge when the last of our men were over, just in time to foil the enemy's attempt to cross. It saved the position. He didn't come out of it unscathed; but—but—he sacrificed his sight to some purpose——"

"His sight? My God! Eric blind? You can't mean——"

"Eric could not get out of range in time. A fragment of shell struck him," she continued, in a lifeless tone. She proceeded towards the door. "He has sacrificed the most precious gift that God has endowed us with; but you—you prostituted yours. Think it over, Josiah."

Josiah is thinking it over.

A RELIC OF THE FIGHT

BY

FRANK WRIGHT

A RELIC OF THE FIGHT [By Frank Wright

TRAVELLERS

BY

A. St. John Adcock

TRAVELLERS.

By A. St. John Adcock.

Come, let us go a-roaming!
  Dear heart, the world is wide,
And half its paths are still untrod,
  And half its joys untried.

The way that led to winter
  Will lead to summer too;
For all roads end in other roads
  Where we may start anew.

Who, when Hope's dead, would linger
  To weep beside her bier,
And let the shadow of a night
  Make darkness through the year?

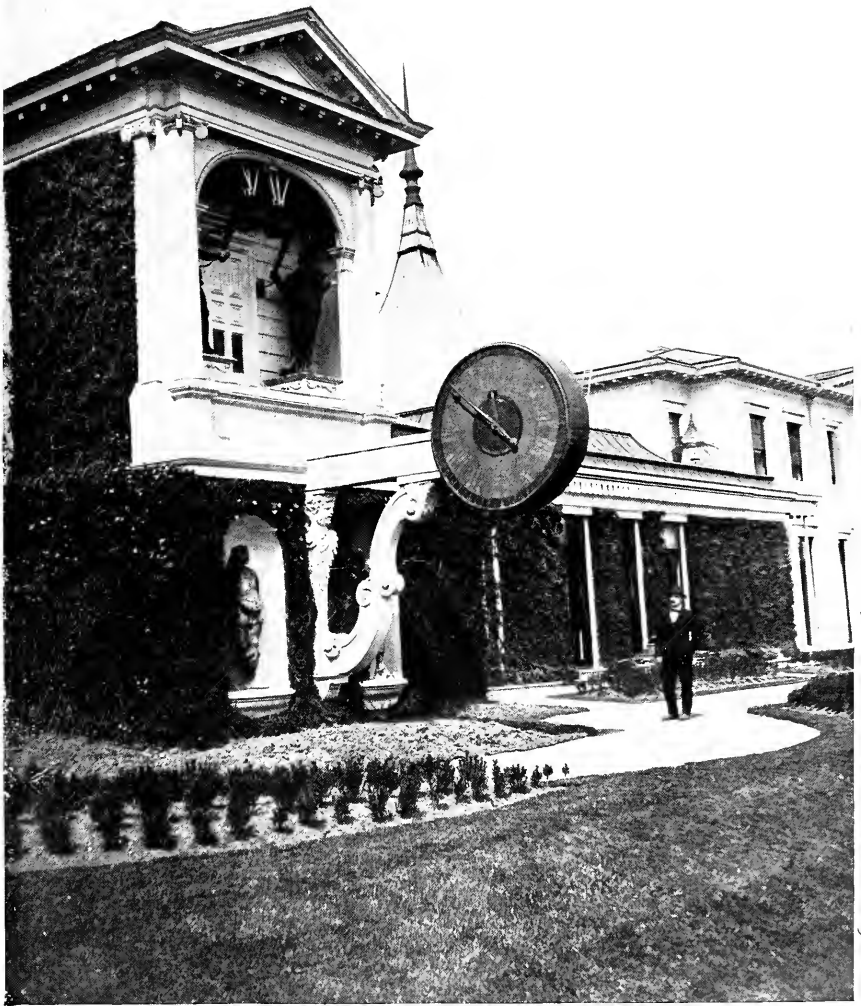
Life is not all unhappy
  Because the day has died:
To-morrow waits behind the hill—
  Dear heart, the world is wide!

A. St. John Adcock

THE KINGDOM OF THE BLIND

BY

CHARLES MARRIOTT



THE BLINDED SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' HOSTEL. [*By kind permission of W. J. Brunell.*

Facing p. 220.

THE KINGDOM OF THE BLIND.

By Charles Marriott.

After a visit to St. Dunstan's, Regent's Park, the hostel for blinded soldiers and sailors, I am inclined to say that only the blind really see. Or, if that is putting it too strongly, that the rest of us have to learn from them how to use our eyes. At any rate, "blind leaders of the blind" will never again mean anything to me but a proverb of human helpfulness.

For that is the ruling principle at St. Dunstan's. The guides in the kingdom of the blind that must now be patiently explored by many of our brave soldiers and sailors are blind themselves. In that kingdom eyes are an impertinence, and even partial sight is an occasion of stumbling. We who have eyes are at such a disadvantage in it that the best we can do is to guard its neutrality in our quarrels about seeing, and secure its right to be governed and developed in its own way. It would be idle and ungrateful to pretend that loss of sight is not a cruel deprivation; but let us not too complacently "pity the poor blind." They have the freedom of a whole world that we, distracted by the pride of the eye, know nothing about. It is a world of sounds and touches and odours; or, rather, a world that by the gradual development and co-ordination of hearing and feeling and smelling discovers itself to a new compound sense that, since it can form mental images, may truly be called "vision." In this

world, wherein we stumble and lose our way, the blind man learns to move with freedom and security ; but only by the initiation of those who have, so to speak, renounced the errors and excesses of seeing with their bodily eyes. This world, busy, fertile, and, if we may judge by the almost universal cheerfulness of its familiars, beautiful, is the kingdom of the blind.

* * * * * *

St. Dunstan's might be regarded as one of the frontier posts of this kingdom ; customs house and quarantine in one. It is not a place for curing blindness, but rather for curing the malady of seeing. Sight is contraband, and hopelessness—in that sense—is the condition of remaining. The history of St. Dunstan's has been told in the Press, but a few words of recapitulation will do no harm. Once the villa of the third Marquess of Hertford, one of the founders of the Wallace Collection and the "Marquis of Steyne" of Thackeray's "Vanity Fair," it was lent by Mr. Otto Kahn to the Blinded Soldiers' and Sailors' Care Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. C. Arthur Pearson. The moving spirit of the hostel, Mr. Pearson is also our most enlightened ambassador from the kingdom of the blind and best interpreter of its needs and policies.

There is poetic justice in the transformation of a one-time stall in "Vanity Fair," snare of the vacant eye, into a porch of the kingdom of the blind. An interesting "property" is the clock, with two hammering giants, which the Marquess of Hertford bought from the church of St. Dunstan's-in-the-West because his nurse used to take him to see the giants strike the hour "when he was a good boy." In his time an almost prophetic ornament of the villa was

IN THE CARPENTERS' SHOP.
(At the Blinded Soldiers' and Sailors' Hostel.)

[*Copyright.*
"*Sport and General.*"

BASKET MAKING.
(At the Blinded Soldiers' and Sailors' Hostel.)

[*Copyright.*
"*Sport and General.*"

Facing p. 222.

"The Vision of St. Helena," by Veronese, now in the National Gallery.

* * * * *

St. Dunstan's is white, long, and low; a true "villa" set in a landscape of that ordered beauty which comes nearest to realising "the heart of the country." When I went there the aftermath, symbol of serenity, was lying in swathes under the mellow September sunlight on the further lawn, which is penetrated by an arm of the lake in Regent's Park. The first thing that struck me was the unsentimental gaiety of the place, a place of high ceilings, red, white, and gold walls, and open doors and windows. It reminded me a little of Mr. Cayley Robinson's "Hall of the Future" in "The Blue Bird." There was the same effect of people waiting eagerly to be born into a new life; and there should have been a ship at the terrace. The presence of nurses—for many of the soldiers are not only blinded but wounded men—completed the impression of looking forward.

The next thing that struck me was the extreme simplicity of such aids as we, seeing, can lend to the blind; an umbrella stand full of stout walking-sticks—the extended arms of the blind—paths of matting on the broad floors and of sheet lead across the stone paving of the terrace, sounding boards to warn foot and ear before obstacles and at every turning, and light handrails along the narrower walks. Nothing else in the way of material direction. Indeed, in moving about the place I felt that directions were needed rather for the seeing, lest they confused the orderly progress of the blind. Speech, I noticed, takes on a new value in the kingdom of the blind; it becomes firm, explicit, and concise, with a slight emphasis on proper names, as if to ensure the grasp of identity.

The general policies of the kingdom of the blind were explained to me by its ambassador. He said that, with loss of sight, the other senses do not become spontaneously more acute. They are developed because they are relied upon. They rise to the occasion. As one had supposed, the faculty of inner vision is, if anything, increased. Certain illusions about the blind were corrected. Thus, though blind women are able to distinguish different coloured wools, it is not by any miracle of touch, but by nice discrimination of the effect of dyes upon the substance of wool. White wool is the softest, black the harshest, and red comes halfway between. Green wool is known by its peculiar smell, and blue by a process of elimination.

* * * * * *

The particular policies of this porch in the kingdom of the blind are simple. Since all are blind together they are not objects of idle compassion, but subjects of practical sympathy, with a view to self-support, under the spur of emulation. Their rapid progress in the kingdom of the blind is due partly to their own character of healthy, alert, and disciplined men, but mainly to the fact that their teachers are blind. From the first they are in the hands of men and women who know the kingdom, its possibilities and resources, and the quickest and most direct way of making use of them. At the moment there are more than one hundred immigrants at St. Dunstan's, many from the Dardanelles. For some unexplained reason an unduly large proportion of them are Lancashire men.

Our first visit was to the lounge, where recreation is combined with the teaching of Braille: reading, writing, and shorthand writing; and the use of the ordinary typewriter.

BOOT REPAIRING.
(At the Blinded Soldiers' and Sailors' Hostel.)

[*Copyright.*
"Sport and General."

"HARD AT IT."
(At the Blinded Soldiers' and Sailors' Hostel.)

[*By kind permission*
of W. J. Brunell.

Facing p. 224.

The Braille shorthand machine has seven keys which print on a " tape " the necessary combinations and permutations of raised dots as they are pressed together or singly. To illustrate, a blind lady took down the words of my blind guide. They so perfectly expressed the spirit of the whole place that I quote them in full :

" This spell of fine weather makes it seem as though we are going to have another of the beautiful Septembers which have been so common of late years. People are rather too apt to grumble at the weather ; as a matter of fact, this summer has been quite a wonderfully fine one—we have only had three bad weeks since the beginning of April."

From the lounge we went to the workshops, where carpentry, boot-repairing, mat-making, and basket-making are taught, each by blind experts of the trade. Thence to the poultry farm and the market garden ; and, finally, to what is one of the most remarkable features of the place—the last two combined. Here, by a most ingenious arrangement of wired enclosures radiating from the four walls of the chicken-house, with a door in each wall, the blind man learns to rear his chickens, with orderly change of run, and grow a succession of crops. Massage and telephony are taught to the tenants of the hostel at the National Institute for the Blind. Thanks to the arm of the lake rowing is a possible recreation at St. Dunstan's. Rowing is an ideal exercise for the blind, because " it gives them the rare sense of helping instead of being helped."

* * * * * *

In everything I saw there was the spirit not of despair, nor even of resignation, but the eager, questing spirit of " blind man's buff." All the time I was being taken about

St. Dunstan's I was conscious of receiving vivid and firm impressions not so much through my own eyes as from the words of my blind guide. Sight for the moment had become a superfluity—a distraction. That seems to me to illustrate not only the principles of the place, but the special resources of the kingdom of the blind. We who see are apt to squander our vision for poor returns. We " glance and nod and bustle by," and not only " never once possess our soul," but fail to take in the essentials of what we see. To the blind man, through the education and co-ordination of his other faculties, vision—as distinct from mere " seeing "—comes back purged and rectified. His mind retains only the essentials. The gain is human as well as practical. It is a psychological truth that sight, owing to different ways of seeing, keeps us apart: only the inner vision brings us together. That vision the blind retain, with added power. Our blinded soldiers and sailors deserve all the practical sympathy and support that we can give them, and, for the cause in which they were blinded, all our gratitude; but in our sympathy and gratitude there need not be any taint of that compassion which comes from the feeling of superiority. They have lost much, but they have gained a self-possession which reproves alike our wanton use of the gift of seeing and our neglect of our other faculties.

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POULTRY FARMING.
(At the Blinded Soldiers' and Sailors' Hostel.)

Facing p. 226.

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MILTON

ON HIS BLINDNESS

SONNET XIX.

WHEN I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide,
Lodg'd with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He, returning, chide ;
" Doth God exact day-labour, light denied ? "
I fondly ask : But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, " God doth not need
Either man's work, or His own gifts ; who best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best : His state
Is kingly ; thousands at His bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest ;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

SONNET XXI.

Cyriack, this three years' day these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, Friend, to have lost them overplied
In liberty's defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask
Content though blind, had I no better guide.

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Goodchild, George

THE BLINDED SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
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