A CONVERSATIONAL TOUR IN AMERICA

E. H. LACON WATSON

3/6

Lydia with love from
Edith & Charlie
Christmas/14

A CONVERSATIONAL TOUR IN AMERICA

BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE UNCONSCIOUS HUMORIST
AN ATTIC IN BOHEMIA
BENEDICTINE
HINTS TO YOUNG AUTHORS
THE TEMPLARS
CHRISTOPHER DEANE
THE MAKING OF A MAN
REFLECTIONS OF A HOUSEHOLDER
THE BARONY OF BRENDON
THE HAPPY ELOPEMENT
BARKER'S
THE FAMILY LIVING

A CONVERSATIONAL TOUR IN AMERICA

By
E. H. LACON WATSON

LONDON: ELKIN MATHEWS
CORK STREET
1914

CONTENTS

A CONVERSATIONAL TOUR IN AMERICA

I

THE CALL OF THE WEST

I PUT it all down to being deprived of my golf during the autumn holidays. When I say "deprived," let me not be misunderstood: I acknowledge that there was no compulsion, not even much undue influence brought to bear upon me. Phyllis, it is true, intimated that she had had enough of Westerfield, but I had long expected her to say so, for we had visited that very uninteresting spot five or six years in succession, and, except bathing and sitting on the sands and occasional conversations with acquaintances whom she picked up at the hotel, there was nothing in the place for a grown and non-golfing woman to do. The day through I was down on the links: the little steam tram would bear me

down there immediately after breakfast ; I would play my two rounds, and catch the four o'clock tram back to the town in time for tea. Only, as a matter of fact, I knew Phyllis would be out on the sands gathering health and exercising the dog, and it would be bad for both of them if any expectation of meeting me brought the habit of returning to the hotel too early. So it came to pass that I generally went to the Wigwam (as we called the social club in the town) and enjoyed a little bridge or billiards or intellectual conversation over the day's golf until the clock pointed to dinner-time. Then I would dash hastily back to the hotel and change.

The male animal can be very selfish at times, and I am glad that my eyes have been opened on this subject. I remember now that I used, even after dinner was over, to sneak off to the club again as soon as we had smoked a cigarette and swallowed a cup of coffee. I am glad that there is no temptation to do anything of the sort here. We have a billiard-room, it is true, but the table is one that I would not select for an important match. It does well enough to give Phyllis lessons on—and what can you want more of a billiard-table than this ? She is now a much

improved player: when she can learn to overcome her natural desire to score without reference to the leave she will be able to give points to some of the young men who come down to see us for the week ends. Impatience has always been her foible: at golf, I remember, she would always hit at the ball long before I had finished my few words of preliminary warning.

They have golf here too, or so I am told, but somehow the news no longer has power to arouse my dormant enthusiasm. I recollect seeing something that looked like a course as we came down in the train, but I feel no desire to gaze again upon those trimly artificial bunkers. To play upon that travesty of a links would be an insult to Westerfield, where we might be at the present moment, but for this madness of altruism—I mean this belated self-sacrifice. I cannot help thinking of Westerfield sometimes in the evenings, when I look once more through the illustrated papers in the hotel reading-room in the vain hope of discovering one that I have not read from beginning to end, advertisements and all. At that hour I ought to be sitting in the smoking-room at the Wigwam, explaining how I broke my opponent's heart by getting on to

the seventeenth green in two; or perhaps playing billiards with the old captain while waiting for an opportunity of cutting in at the bridge-table. This morning I saw in the paper an account of their autumn meeting (which I have not missed before since the close of the last century) and for a few moments the sight of the well-remembered names woke a sort of hunger within me. What a merry hum of voices there would be in the hall, and with what cheerful shouts the party would bid each other good night when at length the club closed and they were turned out into the warm summer night! I think the old days, when I used to put up at the boarding-house (Ivanhoe they called it), were the best. I was free then: I did not have to consider whether I ought to spend so much time away from domestic duties, and I had no dog, demanding exercise at the most inconvenient moments. Even after they closed the club half a dozen of us would sometimes foregather in old Creech's sitting-room and play more bridge until driven to bed by the thought of the next morning's medal round. Those were days! When I find myself thinking of them now I have to remind myself how much more lasting are the

simpler joys of domesticity. The morning and evening dog-walk, the long day spent lying on the shingle, throwing idle pebbles at a post, the protracted delight of fastening the evening dress up the back, with hooks. . . .

Metal eyes should be compulsory in all ladies' dresses. Any other variety gives the Recording Angel so much extra work that I look anxiously in the papers every morning for news of a celestial strike. And why should fashion have decreed that bodices should be fastened up the back at all? I suppose the inventor thought, as Dr. Johnson said of Alexander Pope, that it would annoy somebody. It has, by this time, worried many generations of patient husbands. I dare say it had something to do with my sudden awakening, or it may have been the ships that sailed past our languid gaze day after day, bound for countries that I had never seen. Yesterday afternoon, when Phyllis asked me what I was going to do (perhaps expecting me to suggest a walk to the fishing village or a return to the hotel for tea) I awoke suddenly to the enormity of my persistent laziness, and sat up.

"I am going to America," I announced with tranquillity.

She took in the position with a laugh—Phyllis is often quite quick at bridging gaps in conversation—and I give her plenty of opportunities. It is educational.

"That is interesting," she said. "Am I going too?"

"Certainly not," I said firmly.

I say this was yesterday afternoon, but this is merely because, for the time, I transport myself back to those sultry days we spent at and about the Marine Hotel. What is time? One of the charms of my method of writing is that I consider myself free to use what tenses I please, so long as my readers understand. On receipt of inquiries (when accompanied with a stamped and addressed envelope) I shall always be delighted to explain any apparent inconsistencies. Many things have happened since that afternoon, but I remember as distinctly as possible how it came over me that I was over forty years of age (my birthday, in fact, had just taken place) and that unless I made up my mind to act with decision and celerity, the first journey of any length I undertook might likewise be my last. Was it not a trifle ridiculous that a man should

reach this prodigious age without venturing outside the paltry ring-fence of Europe? To be sure, our continent is of some size: it has historical associations; in many ways it is eminently worthy of study and attention. But the majority of it is cut much to the same pattern. Perhaps it has been civilised too long. They tell me you have to reach the eastern confines (where I have never had the opportunity of venturing) before you come across anything outside the commonplace. And travel is so simple in these days.

"There is no excuse for my staying at home any longer," I said with a sigh. "I have allowed myself to remain here too long, lapped in domestic luxury. It would be criminal of me to neglect this opportunity."

"What opportunity?" Phyllis asked, not unnaturally.

"The opportunity," I said boldly, "of seeing new countries aud strange peoples—of acquiring, in short, knowledge in which I am at present lamentably deficient."

"But what made you think of it just now?"

Strictly speaking, it was, as I have hinted, the deprivation of my customary golf at Westerfield, combined, perhaps, with too much lying on the

beach in the sun with no occupation but the bombardment of inoffensive posts. But to attribute my sudden lust for travel to this might be held uncomplimentary, derogating from the value I set on her society.

"Didn't I tell you," I said, "that the hero of my new novel has to go to British Columbia?"

"No! And why British Columbia? Is that in America?"

"He must go somewhere," I explained. "When the heroine refuses him, you know. They usually go to South Africa and shoot big game, but I will never permit my men to do the usual thing."

Phyllis stifled a yawn. "How dull it will be!" she said as she turned over on her other side. I do not know yet whether she referred to my absence or to the plot of the projected novel.

It is possible that Phyllis did not realise at the time that I meditated anything worse than a passing jest. But from the moment I spoke the purpose was there, crystallised in my mind, and I took care that my preparations should be obvious, even to ostentation. I went so far as to

make my will. And one day I went boldly forth to a certain office in Cockspur Street and returned with an imposing document called a contract ticket, for which I had paid a deposit of five pounds. When I showed this to Phyllis she recognised the inevitable, for that five pounds was irrecoverable, whether I went on board the boat or not, and she has a proper horror of waste. I brought home also for her inspection an even larger paper demanding almost as much attention as an Income Tax form. The inquisitive authorities wanted to know innumerable things—whether I could read and write, if I was a polygamist, anarchist, or had been confined in a prison or asylum; whether I was crippled, and if so, to what extent. There followed an attestation clause:

"I hereby certify that I have made true answers to the questions which were asked in language understood by me, and which answers have been recorded above."

The wording of this, I confess, vexed my literary soul. If it had not been for the five pounds I am not sure that I should have proceeded further with the business. It is only kind to point out to the shipping agents that

they may occasionally lose a sensitive passenger from such reprehensible carelessness.

Phyllis sighed.

"Well! that settles it, I suppose," she said, and proposed (for women are always practical) that I should lose no time in getting some warm clothes, a rug, and a brandy-flask.

II

GETTING THERE

If you have never done anything of the kind before, it is surprising how interesting the ordinary routine (or what is ordinary to the hardened traveller) becomes. I had discovered a friend, going out on business, who proposed to cover something of the ground I meant to travel, and was good enough to suggest that we should share a state-room, or, at all events, as much of it as we could get. For in the autumn the liners are pretty full, and it was likely enough that every berth would be taken. Still, Major Daly would do his best: he knew the agent of the line, and intimated that he expected as an old client to be treated with especial consideration. Personally, I regarded him with reverence: this was perhaps his twentieth crossing, and my first. He regarded it as a necessary evil, to be got over somehow, with smoking and sleeping and a little conversation with carefully selected companions. For the Major was particular on this point: he took

occasion to warn me before I started on the importance of choosing companions with care. Beginning a long journey, he said, whether by sea or on the cars, never allow yourself to become the prey of a stranger, no matter how prepossessing his appearance! Not because he may turn out a rogue—that is of no particular consequence—but because he is only too likely to become a bore. And a ten days' voyage with a first-class bore (to whom you have offered incautious encouragement at the start) is one of the most poisonous experiences that the traveller can encounter by land or sea.

Thus he counselled me as we stood side by side on the upper deck, leaning over the rail and watching huge piles of luggage being hoisted aboard, while the donkey engine clattered and puffed below. The agent stood talking to a preternaturally stout skipper, and Daly seized the opportunity to make one last appeal to him for kindly treatment. For it was too clear that we were not going to have our state-room to ourselves. It was already cluttered up with alien luggage, so that it passed my understanding to imagine how anything of our own could be insinuated into the confined space. Bunbury was

the name on the labels: on a later visit the owner of the name proved to be a fat man in a blue suit, wearing a purple tie. At first sight we did not much like the look of him, but I suppose one is always prejudiced against the third occupant of a cabin barely large enough for two.

But the donkey engine had by now cast off the gangway, and we were moving slowly out of dock. Two tiny little tugs pulled our head round until at length they got us nosing towards an apparently impenetrable barrier, and I was just wondering how we were going to force our way through the mass of shipping in front when I discovered that we were slowly moving backwards. A dock official stood by the gates, bawling and gesticulating, while men adjusted and readjusted huge Manilla hawsers, and the donkey engine again worked feverishly. Then two more tugs were hitched on to pull us out into the Thames, stern first, crushing fenders against the narrow walls. They got us straight, cast off, and we had started.

The Major informed me that I would do well to book a time for the morning bath. I took the absurdly early hour of seven. He was a quarter of an hour earlier. Our third room-mate refused

to take a specified time : as he said, he preferred to see how he felt from day to day.

We had lunch as we dropped steadily down the river. And then most of us wrote letters for the pilot to take ashore at Dover. The lee side of the promenade deck was already lined with deck chairs, on which reclined a row of ladies, well wrapped up and prepared for the worst, reading novels from the ship's library. The smoking-room contained a few men, mostly lying back with their feet on the tables.

We slowed down off Dover, close to the harbour works. The pilot, a smart-looking young man in a white-covered naval cap, stepped nimbly down the ladder aft into his little boat, towing alongside : his oilskins and a bag were lowered after him. He raised his cap and waved his hand as the screw began to revolve again, and he and his row-boat slowly faded away in the distance. The light began to fail.

I stood on deck till late that evening and watched the lights all round—the lights of the towns on shore as we dropped down past Hastings and Eastbourne and Brighton, and turned off to skirt the Isle of Wight, and the red or green

lights of innumerable vessels crossing or meeting us in all directions. The great machine pulsed along steadily, the warning bell sounding almost continually from the look-out forward. It reminded me of threading the traffic in Piccadilly on a motor-bus. I climbed into my bunk that night (over the Major's head, for the old campaigner had wisely taken the lower berth), marvelling at the insignificance of the individual man, as compared with his power in conjunction with his fellows. Bunbury snored peaceably opposite, his superfluity of baggage now stowed away neatly, for the most part beneath his bunk, by the ingenious steward. Some one of our noble species had designed the floating hotel in which he slept: some hundreds of us had forged the steel and riveted it together and built the engines and fashioned all these little cabins, and saloons, and bathrooms, and installed the Marconi wires stretching above our heads, which were even now catching messages across the sea from distant stations and conveying them to the operator who sat in his lonely little hut on the fore-deck, looking as though he might be swept away by the first green sea that came on board from the Atlantic. And a stout and elderly

gentleman in gold-braided frock-coat and laced cap stood on the bridge and conned us carefully amid this amazing Channel traffic, while others, less ornamental in appearance, toiled down below among the furnaces, or watched the sliding pistons. The Major, Bunbury, and I put our trust in one and all of them—and slept.

We passed the Lizard next morning, soon after breakfast. It was decidedly "getting up a bit," as the Major put it, and the attendance at breakfast was nothing like that at the first meal of the previous day. Indeed, few things are more remarkable on an Atlantic liner than the sudden appearance at the end of a voyage of a host of passengers—chiefly ladies—who have not been visible since the opening day. The deck chairs were few in number and sparsely tenanted. I recognised the Major's wisdom in refusing to hire one for a dollar. As he justly said, as soon as it came on to blow a bit we could get as many as we wanted, and a large proportion of the hirers would descend to their state-rooms and be seen no more.

It blew a full gale before the next morning, and only some half-dozen turned up to breakfast.

The entrance to the saloon in the early morning, after our usual brisk deck promenade, is certainly something of a trial to the weaker stomachs. I do not know why the dining saloon and its immediate neighbourhood should retain from day to day the extraordinary smell that distinguishes it. A singular, characteristic, unappetising smell peculiar to steamships, it seems to combine the odour of hot oil with that of innumerable cooked meats. And the authorities do nothing to mitigate the terrors of the repast. You have no sooner taken your seat than the steward comes up stealthily behind you and dabs a large wad of butter on to your plate with a sickly thud. I have seen several turn green and flee at the mere sight of this pat of butter. And it is curious that, when feeling just a trifle doubtful of yourself, you can never get the sort of food you expect. A slice of thin ham, you imagine, would suit you, but you are careful to impress upon the steward that it must be lean : at a moment like this, when the saloon windows are now pointing to heaven and now to the bottom of the ocean, the least touch of fat might have disastrous results. When it comes, it is thick and damp, and fatter than you could have imagined. Yet

one must have courage and eat, and then walk vigorously. There is nothing like energy. After all, this feeling is all nervousness. I only had a touch of doubtful anticipation the second day: on the whole, I was most remarkably free from any uneasiness.

The loneliness of the Atlantic is distinctly impressive. For three or four days we never saw a thing to break that wide expanse of tumbling, slate-coloured water. Steadily we buffeted our way along, the ship slowly curtseying up and down as she met the long Atlantic rollers, knocking off her three to four hundred miles a day according as the wind increased or slackened. Standing on the forward deck, drawing breath with difficulty in the face of the gale, it made me appreciate the valour of those early explorers, beating up against this interminable waste of waters, for two months more than the nine days of our little journey, uncertain whether they should find land at all on the further side, and the biggest vessel at their command a "decked ship of 100 tons."

In spite of the Major's warning against indiscriminate acquaintance, our circle grew steadily

until, by the time we were off the Banks, it included everyone of any interest on board, and perhaps a few of no particular interest to any but themselves. Bunbury, whom we had looked on askance at first, proved himself the most amiable and amusing of companions. Indeed, to have a man, a stranger, as a room-mate in a tiny cabin for the best part of a fortnight, means that by the end one must either hate him fervidly or have a real kindness for him. Bunbury, "dear boy," as we used to call you in your own favourite slang (for you were born and bred of the theatre), I doubt if I shall ever forget you—your rotund body, your immaculate white shoes, always a trifle turned out, your purple tie and humorous clean-shaven face with little twinkling eyes, comically cocked eye-brow, and mobile mouth, always ready with a story or some tag from an old play. You had the face of a real, old-time comedian. I saw you last sitting on your baggage in the customs shed, waiting cheerfully for the examiner to appear. I wonder when I shall have the luck to see you again.

There is something rather sad about the end of a voyage. We were just beginning to find out the worth of some of these chance companions

of ours: we had discovered, perhaps, the one pretty girl on board, and played shuffle-board or deck golf with her after the gale had gone down, and sat and talked with her on the lee-side of the promenade deck after dinner till it was high time to turn in. And we had found out one or two excellent fellows in the smoking-room—curious customers to look at but full of interesting yarns if you knew how to handle them properly. But it is all over now: from the moment that the pilot scrambles up his ladder from his tossing cockle-shell of a boat off Sandy Hook the shadow of the end hangs over us all. Our new friends are hardly recognisable in their shore-going clothes: the decks are crowded with strange forms, not seen since we dropped the pilot at Dover nine days ago: the fore-deck and gangways are already lined with luggage, and everybody is too busy packing or gazing at the panorama spreading out before us. The quarantine boat with her yellow flag has come alongside, the doctor (for once looking almost respectable) receives the port medical officer as we pass the gilded Statue of Liberty, bright in the morning sun, and the tall buildings of New York break the western sky-line. There is the Battery, the North and

East River, the ferry-boats crossing and recrossing to and from the New Jersey shore, and we are passing up to our berth, where you see that black throng of expectant onlookers, with an array of tugs, their noses protected with stout fenders, butting at us to get our bulky form straight as we swing slowly round. We have arrived.

III

NOTES ON NEW YORK

Old campaigner as he was, the Major had, of course, his own ideas as to lodging. He was not out, like the common tourist, to waste money, putting up at any of the big hotels up town, where you had to pay three dollars or more for a bedroom and something like a dollar and a half for a simple breakfast. He led me to a sufficiently solid and comfortable hostelry, once in the height of fashion, but now left stranded by the steady drift of leisure up town. The Major, like all sensible persons, prefers to go where he is known. The gentleman behind the cigar and paper store nodded to him as he entered ; the clerk in charge behind the counter grasped him by the hand as he dexterously swung round the visitors' book for him to sign ; even the bell-boys, darting forward from their seat to take our hand-baggage, recognised him with a smile of welcome. As to the baggage-master (by which grandiloquent name they term the amiable

autocrat who presides over the cloak-room and fulfils generally the duties of hotel porter), the fervour of his greeting was almost painful to witness.

It is a foreign country. Sometimes I think it is almost a foreign language, though easy enough to learn—easier than French or Italian, but perhaps not quite so simple as Lowland Scotch or the best brogue of Kerry. If you have a good working acquaintance with English, as a start, you should be able to make yourself comprehensible to the New Yorker in a day or two, and to understand his replies (always the more difficult matter) in something like a week.

When you consider the cosmopolitan nature of the place, this is not too surprising. New York is the dumping ground of the Old World. You may go down to the Battery or thereabouts (I am not very strong as yet in my topography) and watch the emigrants from Europe being shovelled ashore from Ellis Island. To look at the heterogeneous collection gives food for thought. No country, most of us would say, could possibly swallow such a dose day by day and escape serious internal trouble. But the American Continent has a remarkable power of

assimilation. The young aliens find their feet with an astonishing rapidity. They get a job, perhaps as boot-black in some hotel, and in a week they have picked up a vocabulary of thirty or forty necessary words (reinforced by a good many that are not at all necessary), the whole decorated with a strong German or Italian accent.

I think, on reflection, that it is chiefly these immigrant aliens who are responsible for any serious difficulty I may have had with the language. Unhappily, it is with the bell-boys, the boot-blacks, the clerks and waiters that we have most to do at first, and these are precisely the persons who are most difficult to understand. They are a floating population, perpetually being recruited from new arrivals, and it would be too much to expect that they should acquire a perfect mastery over their new language in a few months. As we get higher up the scale intercommunication becomes easier. But self-preservation compels the visitor to a strange land to learn first the dialect of the waiter.

The little formulas, the way of doing common things, count for more than the mere words. We have to divorce ourselves painfully from half

a hundred expressions, the common coin of everyday life in England ; and keep our minds alert to catch the meaning of their equivalents on the other side. Probably we had a conscious knowledge of many before : we knew that mail, surface-car, grip, baggage were the American equivalents of post, tram, hand-bag and luggage ; but we had perhaps failed to realise that the use of the English expressions produced, more often than not, a blank stare of non-comprehension. It seemed curiously difficult to establish an understanding without vexatious delay. And again, we must conform to the methods of the country in a profusion of little matters. The stranger, entering an hotel, is apt to commence operations in this country by asking if he can have rooms, perhaps also demanding the price and inquiring as to the general arrangements. In New York you may ask questions if you please, but not the slightest attention will be paid to you. The "clurk" (America is severely sensible about pronunciation) swings round the visitors' book on the counter in front of you, hands a pen, and says "Sign!" When you have filled in your name and habitation he may listen to what you have to say ; not before.

Material creatures as we are, food is commonly the matter that most engages our attention when we come to a new land. Ours was, as I have mentioned before, a cheap hotel, and they gave us a sound and satisfying breakfast for the modest sum of half a dollar. The American breakfast is usually excellent and varied, rarely cheap. Our waiter, a recent exile from the Austrian Tyrol, insisted on our ordering the whole repast at once, and as his knowledge of the language was still severely limited we had as a rule to repeat every item three or four times. I may add, in parenthesis, that this method of ordering is rather embarrassing to the stranger, who finds it difficult to forecast the condition of his appetite after he shall have passed, say, the stages of fruit and cereals. And he finds also a variety of choice, an abundance of new and strange dishes. The very names of them have an alluring and appetising sound: they tickle his fancy pleasantly as he sits down and runs his eye over the bill of fare. He cannot resist the opportunity of making experiment among these dainties. Grape fruit, clam chowder, black bass, chicken gumbo, squab. There is something especially satisfying about this last name. It hath a savour:

it closes a period neatly. Thank you, I will have some squab.

I had some, as a fact, last night, for it is hardly a breakfast dish. In my ignorance I had thought it a species of duck. They told me it was a young pigeon.

These reminiscent delights lead me from the point. I was about to say that these foods, excellent as they are, cost a good deal of money. The wandering Englishman, unaccustomed to the notation of cents and dollars, will often discover at the end of a modest meal that he has expended a matter of three or more dollars over a simple dinner, apart altogether from any extras in the way of drink. Fortunately, it is a land in which the ordinary man can subsist on a small quantity of food. Thus, as Laurence Sterne remarked, Providence tempers the wind to the shorn lamb. In my own damp and foggy land I devour regularly three square meals a day, not including a healthy supply of buttered toast for afternoon tea. And on the boat, crossing the Atlantic, I am filled with shame to think that even this list was not enough for us. About eleven in the morning we began to grow fretful and impatient if the steward was not punctually

at hand with his tray of cups of broth and crackers ; and before going to bed the sandwiches in the smoking-room used to disappear as if by magic. Nor do I think this was entirely due to the knowledge that these comestibles were included in our passage money. We felt that we wanted it—all of it—every time. But in New York I find myself getting along quite comfortably on breakfast and dinner, with a cup of coffee in the middle of the day.

The hall of an American hotel is a resting-place for anyone who can find a seat there. If I want a cigar, a paper, or a few moments of quiet reflection, says the Major, I am to walk boldly into the best hotel I can find. The consequence of this agreeable rule is that the hall is commonly somewhat crowded, and the ubiquitous spittoons are very much in evidence. If you sit there awhile, it is odds that some enterprising native, recognising you for a stranger, will enter into conversation with a string of leading questions as to your nationality, business, parentage, and education. If your appearance pleases him, you may shortly see his hand fumbling in his breast-pocket ; he will bring out a wallet and present you with his card. Should you be going

his way, he intimates, look in and see him at Vancouver, or Kansas City, or Baltimore. The Major, in his cynical fashion, says that every time he reaches home again after one of his journeys his wife shakes out his various suits of clothes and collects a bushel or so of these pasteboards—emblems of a passing esteem. He does not take them too seriously; and, indeed, I agree that they are often presented in something too facile a fashion. But it is a friendly spirit, and I shrink from discouraging the chance conversationalist. After all, I am here to get all the information that I can. I do not object to the freedom with which your neighbour on a steamboat or in a railroad car attempts to pump me. I return the compliment by getting what I can out of him.

Some of my countrymen, I am aware, shrink from this freedom of intercourse. We Britons have the reputation, not undeserved, of a cold aloofness, for which reason we still have our railway carriages divided into compartments, and are apt to resent it as an impertinence if a stranger addresses a remark to us without a formal introduction. Our young friend Leigh, the musician, who accompanied us to this hotel

from the boat, confesses that he dislikes the native extremely. A somewhat self-conscious young man (as are most artists) he regards the brusque manner of the hotel clerks as deliberate rudeness, put on for the express purpose of annoying him. He dislikes the boy who runs the elevator breaking into his conversation with me as we are borne upwards to the fifth floor; he even resented the proposal of the clerk at the cigar store that he should accompany him to a base-ball match. Personally, I confess that this free and independent attitude pleases me. The servant is as good as his master; so long as he does his job well, I do not quarrel with the idea. The immigrant alien imbibes the democratic spirit with remarkable readiness.

Some kindly friend to whom I brought a letter of introduction has sent me a card of membership at his club for a fortnight or so. It is surprising how much this means to a foreigner in a strange city. We must needs be a trifle lonely at first, severed from our island home by that dreary expanse of ocean, and it is pleasant to find how soon this feeling is dissipated when we have the freedom of a club. Our self-respect returns; we begin to feel that we have once

more a place in the world, and do not exist merely on sufferance. I wish we had in London something analogous to these weekly or fortnightly tickets of honorary membership, so that we could repay in kind the compliments of which we are unworthy recipients across the Atlantic. When our friends come to visit us at home, the most we can do in return is—to ask them to dinner.

IV

TRAFFIC AND DISCOVERY

I DECIDED the other day that if I wished to see anything of the continent upon which I had rashly intruded, it was necessary to undergo a temporary separation from my companion.

I have been in New York a week or more. It is an interesting city: I have been remarkably well treated, and have seen many things that I would not willingly have missed: in short, I have had a very good time. But sometimes it oppresses me to reflect that there is so much to do, and so little time to do it in. I have been down town, walked on the Bowling Green, the cradle of the city, spent a free half-hour in the Aquarium, beheld the crowd of immigrants coming ashore from Ellis Island, and walked back to the hotel past the Custom House and through Wall Street and Broad Street, where the "kerb market" was in full swing. A friend at the club, anxious that I should see everything under the best auspices, took me one evening to dine

at a Chinese restaurant (and a very excellent dinner it was), and walked me afterwards through the Bowery, and Chinatown, and various other strange places, beguiling the road with stories suitable to the occasion. I recollect he showed me the spot where the police had been forced to dig up a busy street in order to extract a Jew, who was attempting a novel method of burglary. A jeweller's shop stood on one side of the thoroughfare: on the other was a vacant lot. The Jew conceived the idea of burrowing his way across, and actually succeeded in getting more than half-way when he stuck fast. I believe it was his wife who gave information of his uncomfortable predicament, and the police dug him out ignominiously. What puzzled the authorities chiefly was the manner in which he had concealed all trace of his excavations. Apparently, with the aid of his wife, he used to remove the earth that came out of his tunnel every morning.

As to the up-town district, everything of interest was pointed out and explained to me in the course of two hours by a professional humorist with a megaphone as I sat on the back seat of a motor-car. The profane call this conveyance a rubber-wagon; its occupants, rub-

ber-necks. The Major commends them heartily to the stranger who wishes to get some acquaintance with a strange land, without needless waste of time. But at present I can get the Major to accompany me nowhither. Something, I imagine, has gone wrong: certain important documents have failed to arrive, or there is unexpected trouble with the customs. In the meanwhile, the enforced inaction is telling on his nerves. He sits in the smoking-room of the hotel, biting his carefully trimmed moustache, not in the best of tempers. He does not know in the least when he will be able to start for Canada and the Pacific coast.

Excellent fellow as the Major is, perhaps it is just as well. I have long been of opinion that the only way to travel abroad is to go alone—if you want to bring back anything from your journey. The man who takes a fellow countryman with him is afraid of himself: he is carrying about, for the sake of ease and comfort, a portion of his own fatherland: he is losing every day a hundred opportunities of learning something new about the nation he is visiting. I say the nation, not the land. To my mind the men and women of a country are vastly more important

than the scenery, the buildings, the manufactures. I would walk three miles to converse with a man of intelligence rather than one to see a waterfall. When abroad, I make a point of talking with as many people as possible—and the more miscellaneous my collection at the end of the day, the better I am pleased. But I admit that it is something of an exertion—at first. Like most, I am apt to take the line of least resistance, and when I have a companion it is easier to talk to him than to a stranger. Go forth alone, and you will be thrown upon your own resources: in self-defence you will be compelled to extract information from the native.

Yet it is curious how difficult it becomes to drag yourself away from a strange place, when all around you is stranger still. I think this reluctance to move must be strongly ingrained in my disposition: I attach myself to a place, after three or four days' residence, with a limpet-like tenacity. It took me nearly a week to determine upon a decisive step; and if the Major (momentarily in a more cheerful mood) had not accompanied me himself to Pier No. 19 and marched me firmly on board the boat, I might have been still postponing my expedition. Though

I had talked it over so frequently with friends at the club that I think for very shame I should have been forced into setting out. Conscious of my own weakness, I am always careful to discuss my plans freely in advance. Thus, when my departure is five or six days overdue, the force of public opinion will commonly impart sufficient driving power at length to my reluctant limbs.

It was settled that I should go by the Fall River route to Boston.

I do not know how we arrived at this conclusion, but it was reached somehow. I fancy we are all creatures of less independence of action than we like to believe. When I commit an overt act, and cast about in my mind for the reasons that have led me to do so—I am naturally prone to self-analysis—I commonly find that my action is the resultant of half a hundred suggestions put forward by amiable acquaintances desirous of increasing my store of experience. Thus, it was the Professor who first suggested Boston; the Major who put forward the claims of the water-way; and at least half a dozen members of the club who turned up the advertisements in the daily papers, went over the journey with me

on the map, and, in short, made it impossible for any self-respecting man to go anywhere else.

But I think I should have insisted upon going to Boston anyway. It is full of memories, historical and literary. Perhaps the literary associations appeal to me more strongly than the others, but they are curiously mingled in my mind. I wanted to see Boston harbour—that harbour that was "black with unexpected tea," in Carlyle's delightful phrase—and the spot where the first blow was struck for independence, and the monument on Bunker's Hill (which I find is not on Bunker's Hill at all), and the Old State House (the lion and the unicorn still visible on the façade), and innumerable other things. Boston is probably more familiar to us, in some respects, than any other city in the Union. From Hawthorne to W. D. Howells, novelists have taken it as their scene: Longfellow and Emerson and Wendell Holmes dwelt in its vicinity: writers innumerable have dealt with its history and traditions. We know of the Common, and the Frog-Pond, and the Long Walk: we have read at least the story of Paul Revere. And I take it there are not many of us now who feel any bitterness on

being reminded of the successful revolution that deprived us of half our American colonies.

These American river steamers are a marvel. Floating palaces, moving hotels. I admit that we have nothing to compare with them in England. But, then, we have no rivers that would carry them—for more than a few miles. They seem to move through the water at a prodigious pace. I forget what my informant on the *Commonwealth* declared was that vessel's rate of speed, but when I stood in the gangway just outside the purser's office and watched the water sliding past, I believed him without reservation. We looked, in the dim light of evening, to be going almost as fast as an express train. My informant told me also that she was built by Cramp, of Philadelphia, cost a number of dollars that my memory has failed to retain, and was one of the finest boats of her class in the world. With that passion for statistics so common with Americans (perhaps it is one of the sources of their greatness), he gave me further details as to her measurement and tonnage, all redounding greatly to the glory of Cramp. In his opinion, that celebrated firm were the only shipbuilders in

the world who could be trusted to turn out a vessel of any size properly.

"That *Lusitania* of yours," he said darkly—there seemed a note of contempt in the accent he threw upon its third syllable—"will end up at the bottom of the Atlantic."

I made a feeble stand in defence of the big Cunarder. But I admit that to all appearance the firm of Cramp had done their work adequately, so far as the appointments of the steamer went. Broad staircases, worthy of some baronial castle, led upwards to a magnificent saloon, surrounded by a double row of state-rooms. An orchestra discoursed popular airs to us as we sped swiftly up Long Island Sound: on the upper deck the restaurant was as large and as well served as in the hotel I had just quitted. There was even a telephone in my well-appointed cabin. The only criticism I have to make on these boats is that Cramp or his clients appear to think that the sea should be shut out of view as much as possible. But then the business man has no time to waste on moonlight effects. He wishes to travel from New York to Boston, or vice versa, without wasting a moment of working time: he gets a good dinner, music, a comfortable night,

and breakfast in the morning. No sensible man could want more.

It may be as well to set down here a few first impressions before they become overlaid with others. This matter of telephones in the bedroom is apt to bother the stranger a little at first. Young Leigh, I remember, who is typically English and a trifle obstinate, objected strongly to them. He used to open his door in the morning—he slept on my landing—and call for hot water, without the slightest effect. If you want anything at these hotels, from a boot-lace to breakfast in bed, you must communicate your wants to the young lady at the other end of the telephone, and in due time a bell-boy will appear at your door. The Major had kindly warned me earlier that it was useless, even dangerous, to leave my boots outside the door at night. Somewhere in the basement there are always to be found a row of comfortable chairs, with boot-blacks in attendance. Ten cents is the usual price for their services. Probably a barber's shop is also concealed somewhere about the premises—a pleasant but sometimes an expensive luxury. If you permit yourself to be persuaded

into face massage and other soothing experiments you may find yourself charged a dollar or even two when at length you rise to go.

Leigh complained that they always hid his pyjamas, and that the pillows were placed upright on his bed like a pair of sentinels. But then Leigh permits himself to be worried unduly about little things. The architecture of New York seemed to me slightly marred by the number and size of the fire-escapes. Many houses have big iron staircases zigzagging down their front walls. These are not ornamental, but if they are necessary (and fires in New York are apt to be serious matters) I do not see that I have any right to complain. In fact, being on the top floor in my hotel, I was not a little relieved to discover one of these formidable flights starting directly from my own window.

V

CHIEFLY ABOUT CONDUCTORS

I SUPPOSE the wielder of the megaphone is now silent for a season, or pursuing some quieter vocation elsewhere. At New York, and again at Boston, I made of my ears a funnel to receive information, spiced with occasional dashes of humour. Later—and I have gone some way further since then—I find the interpreter silent, and his late clients going about the town by themselves, saddened, their fingers between the leaves of an ineffectual guide-book.

This conductor, with his motor-car and his megaphone, is one of those admirable economical institutions on which Americans may justly pride themselves. How eagerly the American on his European travels must sigh for some cicerone of this quality—some one who shall expose to him, so to speak, the heart of an ancient city in the space of two hours at the modest price of one dollar! They have their guides, these others, it is true, but what miserable substitutes for the real

thing! I remember the fat, soft-voiced Italian who showed me around Naples and Pompeii; how he walked us from place to place, gathering us about him at intervals to explain matters confidentially in his voluble but difficult English. Or, again, the amiable gentleman—a mine of archæological lore—who drove a party of us along the Appian Way, or explained to us the mysteries of the Palatine or the Colosseum. Our hero of the megaphone, in New York or Boston, would have stared aghast at the learned doctor. The prolixity of the worthy man! He took a whole day, if I remember right, over the Colosseum and the Via Appia. The sprightly talker under whose speaking-trumpet I saw Boston had done with that city (including the Navy Yard at Charlestown) within the space of two hours.

I suppose the advent of motors has made these things possible. When I visited the cities of Italy motor traction was yet in its infancy. Perhaps by this time the big tourist agencies are running cars and conductors in all European cities where tourists most do congregate. If so, I hope they employ imported Americans to do the honours of the place. There is no doubt that

the best conductors come from the New World. Those that I have seen hitherto appeared to have their heart in their job and to take a justifiable pride in working up the humorous touches with which they adorned their narrative. It was pleasant to note the air of modest yet self-satisfied deprecation with which the performer would turn away, laying down his instrument, after bringing off some successful phrase. It seems an agreeable and independent profession, and I should conceive it to be an excellent training for a political career. The graces of the practised orator must soon be acquired by the conductor. At the end of a month's constant work he must have at his command all the tricks of the trade, all the old and battered circumlocutions that come to the aid of the rhetorician when his memory or his invention fail. And he should learn also the sort of humour that best suits a general audience.

I conversed with my conductors when I found an opportunity. In New York I took the occasion of our halt at Grant's tomb, where the party scattered for a quarter of an hour or more, and the conductor enjoyed a quiet smoke, sitting on the step of his car. He confessed that the game had a fascination for him : he came back

regularly to it every season. In the winter he travelled in some commodity or other—had been as far west as Chicago—meant to go to Europe when he got the chance.

His Boston confrère was, by comparison, more sober and less humorous. He did not indulge in personalities, but confined himself strictly to history. "That man," our New Yorker had said, pointing to the house of a prominent citizen, "has everything in the world but children. Nothing runs around that house but the railing." Now this, I am aware, is a sufficiently ancient jest—a commonplace of American humour—and no doubt it had served its turn before with many another caravan of sightseers; but it showed that our man was desirous of providing entertainment to the best of his ability, and we accepted it gratefully in that spirit. Our graver, spectacled Bostonian would not have lowered his dignity by indulging in such witticisms. With him I had a few words in the Navy Yard at Charlestown, while the others of our party were exploring the lower decks of an ancient wooden frigate, preserved there for show, like the *Victory* in Portsmouth Harbour. Looking at the curious trellis masts of the modern battle-

ships lying in the basin, he hazarded the fitting opinion that it was high time for the Powers to agree to a general disarmament. I think he must have been of Quaker extraction.

Two things stand out amid my scattered memories of Boston. One is the name of Paul Revere, which cropped up persistently at intervals throughout our expedition. We were shown the spot, on the far side of the bridge, from which he set out on his famous midnight ride; the steeple of the church from which the warning lights were displayed; I believe even the house of the sexton who furnished the lanterns for the occasion. And the other thing that struck me forcibly was the remarkably bad paving of the Boston streets. The worn and rounded stone squares which are used in the majority of these gave everyone on our car a jolting which they will not readily forget. The life of a light motor-car in that famous city must be short indeed, and full of adventure.

I wandered on to the Common that evening and saw the gilded dome of the State House gleam in the setting sun. And then I walked further, penetrating into all sorts of crooked

streets and eventually losing my way so completely that I got back to my hotel at last fairly exhausted. Boston is a hilly town : the way in which the electric cars grate up and down the narrow streets and round the numerous sharp corners reminded me of Rome. Like New York, Boston has its Elevated, its surface cars, and its subway : the elevated, curiously enough, dives into a tunnel for a good part of its length, passing under the business part of the city. Unlike New York, it adheres to the old-fashioned method of street nomenclature, so that it demands a good sense of topography in the stranger who ventures on solitary exploration.

I suppose I have not yet acquired the right style of address—the style that inspires confidence. Or is it that the American citizen is naturally reluctant to explain anything definitely for the benefit of a foreigner? His behaviour, when I have had occasion to ask ordinary questions, suggests a fear that he is being tricked—that I must know so simple a matter and am proposing to laugh at him for his pains if he supplies such unnecessary information. At Fall

River, where I discovered that I should have to walk a mile or so to the station, I asked my way of the clerk in charge of the booking-office. He waved his arm (by no means in the right direction) and said "Right there!" with the air of one who makes a concession to an idiot. Afterwards he appears to have relented, for he came to the door of his office in time to shout at me when I was taking a wrong turning. But he made me retrace my steps for two hundred yards or more, carrying a heavy bag, before he would put me straight. In general, the traveller is assumed to be able to find his way about. Information is rarely, if ever, volunteered: it has to be extorted. Thus, the Major (usually a safe enough guide) had told me it would be more convenient to stay on board the boat when it arrived at Fall River, have breakfast comfortably at a decent hour instead of rising at six, and go up to Boston by a later train. When I explained this to the coloured gentleman who called me in the morning, he did not think it his duty to inform me that the restaurant on the boat would be closed before eight, or that I should have to walk a mile to another station in order to get my train. He merely displayed his

teeth and left me to the consequences of my rash act.

I have met with other instances of similar treatment since. But I am learning by degrees. The conclusion is forced upon me that my manner of inquiry is too polite. The native, unaccustomed to anything but the shortest mode of address, suspects a trap. This is what comes of having an exaggerated sense of the value of time.

VI

ABOUT SALEM—WITH A NOTE ON RAILROADS

Boston is pleasantly situated as a centre for exploration, if you should be so minded. Just across the Charles River lies Cambridge, the seat of Harvard University: further on, some miles into the country, but attainable by surface car, lie Lexington and Concord. In this last village dwelt, among other literary celebrities, Hawthorne, Emerson, and Thoreau. The Old Manse still exists, built for Emerson's grandfather in 1765, in which Hawthorne wrote one of his best-known works. The houses of Emerson, the Alcotts, and Hawthorne lie close together. So at least the guide-book informs us, mentioning also that the place is known as the Weimar or Stratford-on-Avon of America. I cannot speak in this instance from personal experience, for I never went to either of these interesting spots. For some obscure reason I went instead to Salem.

Perhaps it was because the name pleased me. Massachusetts (whatever you may think of the state's own designation) undoubtedly bestowed some pleasing names upon its towns and villages. Or it may have been because Salem was one of the earliest settlements and for a time capital of the state; or because of the famous Witch Trials, or of its being the birthplace of Hawthorne, and containing the House of the Seven Gables. Actually, I think it was due to that blind chance which plays so large a part in human action. I went out of my hotel and boarded the first car I saw: it took me to the North Station, and I found that a train was starting for Salem in ten minutes.

Means of locomotion have always interested me from my earliest youth. It is possible that the cars and locomotives of a people may, in some subtle manner, be an index to their character. What first strikes the traveller in America, I imagine, is the unfinished appearance of the engines. They look powerful, but untidy, as though the maker had added a few cranks and tubes and struts here and there as he thought suitable, finding his first attempt at a locomotive not wholly satisfactory. They have a makeshift air; but I am given to understand

that this is deceptive. Indeed, the Professor displayed some annoyance when I carelessly said something of this kind to him on my return to New York. I chanced to mention that I preferred the bright appearance of an English engine, with its shining brass-work and fresh colouring; but he explained that American constructors had once themselves been led astray by this child-like desire of gaudiness. A severe and Quakerish simplicity had been found to answer better. And as to the tubes and struts, frankly, he could not understand what I meant. They were built on the most scientific principles, and it was to be remembered that they had a lot of hard work to do.

"For all that," I said, "you must admit that they look clumsy." But the Professor would not admit it for a moment. He entered into an explanation of the rise and growth of the railroad system of the continent, pointing out that the appearance of the modern engine was due entirely to gradual adaptation for the work it had to do. It was, in short, the child of its environment. From that we were led easily onwards to discuss Beauty in the abstract, for he and I were alone in the club at that time.

The persistent clanging of that bell is another feature of railroad travel on the other side, particularly in the outskirts of a town, where level crossings (they call them grade crossings) are numerous. As I sat in the car that morning I found it difficult to persuade myself that I was not hurrying through some London suburb on a Sunday, listening to some recently built tin conventicle summoning worshippers to service. There was something inexpressibly mournful and Sabbatarian about that tolling monotone.

As to the cars, the windows are difficult to open, and not very satisfactory when they are opened. They are raised from the bottom upwards, with difficulty, for a space of about six inches. You cannot put your head out and survey the surrounding scenery, and the current of fresh air strikes you about the region of the diaphragm. But there is more variety about a long journey than there is at home. The newsboy perambulates the cars incessantly, selling books and papers and all sorts of refreshments, from cigarettes to boxes of preserved figs. And the conductor deals at intervals with your ticket —so frequently that it is usual to carry it in your hat-band or some equally conspicuous position.

But it was not a long journey to Salem—a matter only of seventeen miles or so. It is a small town, and I walked through it from end to end and back again without discovering much of what I wanted to see. There seemed to be curiously few places of entertainment; it was a long time before I could discover a shop where I could get anything to eat, in a light way. Few things prejudice a traveller more than this against the town he is visiting. Yet I liked Salem, and when at length some kindly shopkeeper presented me with a little chart of the town, showing all the places of interest, I set out with renewed hope. But the place, I protest, might be supplied with a restaurant or two. And it might, if it must have a statue at all, set one up to the real genius of the place, instead of that effigy of the Irish priest who preached the cause of temperance. When I saw this in the distance, I went towards it, expecting to read the name of Hawthorne on the pedestal, and found instead that of—Father Mathew.

With the aid of my chart I discovered at length the House of the Seven Gables, close to the waterside by an old deserted wharf. Finding the novelist's birthplace was a more

difficult matter. I believe the present occupier of the house has been compelled to discountenance the persistent sightseer even to the extent of removing the number plate from her door. The fact is, your sightseer is too often also your unprincipled hunter of curios, leading on occasion to the mutilation of furniture, which, it must be admitted, is going too far. This desire for some tangible memorial of a visit becomes an obsession, a disease; and, like kleptomania, it frequently attacks persons in the highest ranks of society and possessed of considerable wealth. It connotes, I should say, a lack of imagination —an inability to appreciate the abstract without some help from the concrete. Justly or unjustly, American visitors to Europe have always been regarded as peculiarly susceptible to this vice.

Like most of the older houses in Salem and this district, Hawthorne's birthplace is a plain, wooden, shingle-built structure, presenting no features of interest from the outside. The Major, when I got back to New York, was much amused to learn of the difficulties I experienced in finding it. When he visited the town, some few years ago, he conceived the happy idea of engaging a local policeman to show him the

lions of the place. Overjoyed at the prospect of some active employment, the officer of the law took him everywhere, and insisted upon his seeing everything. Even the doors of Hawthorne's birthplace yielded before the Major, thus escorted. On the strength of that policeman's recommendation and guarantee of good behaviour—have I told you that the Major is of Irish extraction?—the amiable occupant permitted him to enter, and even invited his sympathy. She was, she confessed, pestered with tourists; they would come in and cut pieces off the chairs and tables when her back was turned. My friend so won her heart by his reprobation of these miscreants that she insisted upon his carrying away a flower from the little garden when he left.

"What did you give the policeman for his trouble?" I asked.

"Two cigars," he replied promptly. "He enjoyed it as much as I did. A policeman at Salem must have about the slowest time of any official on earth."

"I wish you had mentioned this plan of yours before," I said, rather gloomily. This is the worst of my companion; his happiest thoughts

almost always come too late to be of practical benefit. He is more excellent as a commentator on the established fact than as a suggester.

"My dear chap, I never thought of it," is his invariable excuse.

My trouble with an unofficial conductor would be the difficulty of knowing what to give him. I am inclined to think this matter of reward for voluntary service one of the chief obstacles to the complete enjoyment of foreign travel. One can get from experienced friends a schedule, more or less, of the proper fees for waiters, barbers, and other ministrants of this class: it is when we employ the casual helper that we begin to be harassed with doubts. The Major seems to know what to offer by a sort of instinct. Cigars, and a friendly manner, he maintains, are the best possible currency. But I have no Irish blood in my composition.

VII

ON THE WAY TO CANADA

I AM so many miles from the Professor now that I think of him with an added kindliness, as of friends left on the far side of the Atlantic, whom I may see in two months' time, or, possibly, never again. Yet I suspect him of being a misogynist. Since we are using Greek, shall I say a gynaecophobe? I believe that would be nearer the truth, though Webster may not recognise the word. But his sentiment towards the sex is sometimes so bitter that I fancy it must be founded on fear. They tell me that the fiercest enmity has commonly its rise thus.

Before starting for Canada I spent a long evening with the Professor, arguing over things —humour, literary style, the Japanese, modern society. It was over the last topic that the Medusa of sex reared her horrid front. The Professor maintained the thesis that American society (at all events in the big cities of the east) was tending to a gradual segregation of the

sexes. It was run, he said, by women for women. Men were not wanted there: the machine had no place for them. "Go to any social function, and tell me, what could they do with a man? I mean a real man—not a brainless marionette. All they care about is the idle chatter of senseless frivolity."

He eyed me steadily, and a little disconcertingly, through his gold-rimmed spectacles. These remarks were not made consecutively: the Professor talks in jerks, with long intervals of silence, and he has no great command of language. But every now and then an illuminating phrase crops up: his face becomes animated: his eyes brighten behind their spectacles. In general the phrase crystallises some violent statement. For a man of science—presumably of a philosophical temper—his opinions are curiously forcible. Yet he has warned me more than once against the folly of generalising from insufficient premisses.

"The tendency here," he said, "is for the sexes to live entirely separate lives. In the wealthier section of society, the women are forming camps of their own. By the sea, in the summer, they have hotels where men are

hardly permitted to enter. Discouraged—in every possible way."

There was a considerable period of silence, during which the Professor sat smiling at his own thoughts, evidently preparing a final and conclusive statement of the case. Unfortunately, some neighbour interjected a humorous comment. I laughed: the Professor acknowledged the jest with a grave inclination of the head and a somewhat perfunctory smile. But his train of thought was hopelessly upset.

"Humour," he remarked, about half an hour later, when the jester had gone downstairs to the supper-room, "is often excessively tiresome."

And we fell to discussing humour from that standpoint.

He has, I have noticed, a pleasant way of putting his opinions very strongly at the outset. The remainder of the discussion is then occupied by the slow process of reducing these denunciatory sentiments to their just level. At the end they have commonly become far milder—even reasonable. But he remains, I think, rather intolerant of flippancy. An interruption that is not serious and to the point he regards as a signal to change the topic. Forthwith he

switches the conversation on to another line, and it is a matter of the greatest difficulty to persuade him to return to the old track. It is not impossible that the light-hearted inconsequence of some lady talker is partly responsible for his avowed contempt of the sex.

I do not know what brings you before me so vividly to-night, my dear Professor, unless it be that I am just a trifle lonely here in Quebec. In this comical little hotel—it might be at some small town on the French coast—I am reduced to writing these words up in my bedroom, with a fountain pen. And as I write I seem to hear you talking, in your low, pleasant voice, just audible without undue strain; and to see your kindly eyes beaming across at me (just a trifle disconcerting in their intent gaze) from behind those gold-rimmed spectacles. What a number of things we discussed that night! Our views on travel, I imagine, were tolerably in agreement. For am I not also, in my humble and unscientific fashion, a student of character, of humanity? But there is this of the pathetic in travelling, which we did not touch upon that evening, this constant separation from new and casual acquaintances who possess elements that

seem worthy of further study—who might develop into friends. And sometimes, when I am thrown back upon myself, as I am to-night, I marvel at the futility of it all. What is the use of meeting all these pleasant personalities on the cars, in hotels, in steamers, if we leave them in a few hours to scrape acquaintance with a fresh set? Well! A few of the elect may survive. And that thaumaturgic wheel of chance may bring others of them across our path again before we die.

I started on my journey to Canada by taking another river steamer up the Hudson to Albany.

The name of the boat in which I travelled that night has escaped me, but I remember that I could not sleep. I was suffering from a species of claustrophobia (as the scientists term it) that sensation of being shut up in a confined space, with no visible means of outlet. When I got on board in the evening I made my customary peregrination of the various saloons and passages, finding at length one small door that opened on to a tiny patch of deck. For the rest, we were enclosed, shut in between solid blocks of state-rooms, without so much as a gangway round them on the outside. And radiators stood at

every corner, heating the air to suffocation. I had a luxuriously appointed cabin, but I tossed on my bed all that night in a fever of heat. There was not the smallest chance of ventilating that room anywhere.

Albany is the capital of New York State—a fact which is not universally known to the incurious European. To be quite honest, I did not know it myself until the Professor told me, just before I started. I spent some six hours in it the next morning—very much against my will.

There seems to be a malign fate attendant on my river expeditions. I suppose the fact is that we of the old country are accustomed to receive an almost grandmotherly attention on our little journeys. It is no easy matter for anyone in England to escape the vigilance of guards and porters and find himself in the wrong train. Information is proffered freely : catechisms from anxious officials are frequent. And consequently we have grown into the dangerous habit of assuming that we shall be told if anything is wrong. But the American citizen takes good care to find out for himself. Now I knew when the train started for Montreal. Mindful of former

experiences, I allowed myself, as I thought, plenty of time for a leisurely breakfast; and when the coloured porter carried my kit-bag on to the landing-stage I still had a good twelve minutes in hand. But when I looked round there was no train visible.

"Where is the station?" I asked.

"Twelve blocks," said the man, with the curtness of his tribe.

I think it must have been more. I know we walked an incredible distance, for there were no vehicles about at that hour, and arrived at the station, after much undignified and disturbing haste, just in time to see the tail of our train disappearing in the distance. I believe I was very angry, but it was undoubtedly my own fault. It is difficult to say why I should have assumed that the train would start from some place within a reasonable distance of the boat.

Albany is neat and not unattractive. It began to rain after I had had a shave and sallied out to look at the town, but I retain a kindly recollection of certain by-streets, paved with red brick and fringed with gaily painted wooden houses. Founded by the Dutch in 1609, something still

remains about the town characteristic of those early settlers.

The Capitol[1] stands out well on the rising ground, at the top of State Street, with a fine open square in front of it. An informative stranger told me that the big new building they were completing hard by, a huge pillared erection on the right of the Capitol, was the predestined home of the educational authorities, and that some five hundred architects had sent in competing plans.

They seemed, to my jaundiced eye, to have selected a very ordinary specimen. But I admit that I was in a bad temper that morning.

Few things impress the Englishman in this country, I imagine, more than the water-ways—the lakes and rivers. Wonderful are the twin rivers of New York, by day or night. I have seen them from many places and in many ways—from the heights of Brooklyn at night, from the deck of an ocean liner, from two out of the three bridges, and now from two of these palatial river steamers. I remember looking over to the New Jersey shore as we set out that evening up

[1] It has been burned down since I saw it.

the Hudson, the sun just disappearing in the west and the stars beginning to hang out their lamps in the pearly sky. We glided out from our pier into a maze of twinkling lights, a pandemonium of sound. Hooting ferry-boats dashing madly across from side to side, tugs with barges in tow, vessels of all descriptions passing steadily up and down the flood—through all these we threaded our way in the growing darkness by a sort of magic. And then the lakes. Champlain begins, if I remember right, with some patches of reedy, marshy ground not far above Whitehall. For some four hours the train ran by its shores, cutting off perhaps a few miles here and there, until it turned off somewhere in the darkness towards the St. Lawrence and Montreal. The Adirondacks, where the tired city-dweller delights to camp out in his summer holiday, rose on our left. And at last came the St. Lawrence itself. We passed across the Victoria Jubilee Bridge in the darkness, the shadowy forms of the girders just visible on either side. It seemed of a prodigious length. And then the cars clanked, with much tolling of bells, into Bonaventure Station, amid the chatter of a strange tongue. We were in Montreal.

I admit that I had never realised before how French are the Eastern cities of Canada. We hear vaguely in England of French Canadians, and imagine them a mere sprinkling, fast dying out, whereas in Montreal, the first city of the Dominion, they are in a considerable majority. It is a bilingual city; the important papers are about equally divided between the two languages; the officials (police, car conductors, and so forth), are much more conversant with French than with English. Here in Quebec, among the poorer classes, French is all but universal. I say French, but it bears, so far as the spoken word is concerned, not much resemblance to what we hear in Paris. Perhaps this has something to do with the feeling of isolation which oppresses me here. I confess that I like to be able to exchange opinions freely—to understand and to be understood without much delay and undue repetition. But the landlord of this strange little hotel speaks incomprehensibly, and when I address him I see him struggling mentally to translate my remarks into his own barbarous vernacular. I cannot feel at home in Quebec at present.

VIII

THE TERRITORIAL

Let me admit that Quebec can be surpassingly beautiful.

My second day in that city was fine and sunny, with just sufficient frost in the air to inspire energetic action. I walked about the town most of the morning, climbed the heights by the citadel, and spent some time perambulating the long wooden platform, known as Dufferin Terrace, on which the happy residents in the Château Frontenac are accustomed to take their morning stroll. Surely this is the most superbly situated hotel in the world. If I had known of its existence earlier, I should have been tempted to go there rather than to the comical little place that I chose on the Major's recommendation. Whereby, as it happened, I should have missed a certain amount of amusement.

The view over the St. Lawrence from those heights was worth a long journey. On the wide, blue river, under a blue sky, lay a British cruiser

at her moorings, a thin stream of dark smoke issuing lazily from the midmost of her three funnels. Now and again a little steam pinnace would shoot out hastily from her side, make for the landing stage, and return crab-wise to the parent ship, fighting all the way against a stiff current. Three ferry boats crawled leisurely across from time to time, their noses also turned upstream as they sidled over. After the Hudson and the East River, this paltry show of traffic seemed infinitesimal. It gave a touch of life to the scene, and that was all. Beneath my feet lay huddled together the roofs of the lower town, their picturesque confusion somewhat damaged by the plentiful supply of rubbish—paper and tin cans and broken crockery—scattered over them. Quebec has no great reputation for cleanliness. And everywhere, as I tramped along the narrow wooden sidewalks, trolley cars grated and swung round surprising curves and unhappy horses toiled with their loads up astounding slopes, zigzagging painfully from side to side.

But, in the retrospect, Quebec is chiefly memorable to me now because of the Territorial.

I call him by that title in my own mind, though I have my doubts whether it was really the name

that he gave himself. Prodigal as he was of information, he was not always as intelligible as I could wish. It is true that I was first attracted to him by the fact that he was the only other English speaking resident at the hotel, but some of his flowers of expression were strange to me, as, no doubt, mine were to him.

I have mentioned before how often the Major has warned me of the danger incurred by encouraging casual talkers. That way we may encounter angels unawares, but the odds are against us: we are far more likely to attach to ourselves a bore—the most difficult of all animals to dismiss when his society begins to weary us. Terrible are the stories my friend has retailed to me of his struggles with this numerous and active tribe. I agree that it is the part of wisdom to walk warily in these matters, and especially at the commencement of a long journey. But I confess to a thirst for information; perhaps also to a natural amiability. I find it hard to repulse a stranger who volunteers his confidence, though I stop short sometimes at repaying him in kind. And on the whole I think the traveller gains more than he loses by adopting an attitude of reasonable cordiality. I did not therefore check

my new acquaintance when he set out to recount the history of his life.

Even in this continent of statisticians, where men are for ever seeking to overpower the listener with an array of figures, I have never yet met a man more prodigal of detail, more anxious to impart knowledge. His favourite phrase—"Now I'll tell you something"—was his characteristic exordium: when he began thus, tapping my knee with his forefinger as he leaned over impressively, I got ready my mental note-book, prepared to receive solid chunks of information. Born in Chicago eight and thirty years ago, he told me the story of his life—the early struggles, the number of years he had been married, the children he had brought up, and the professions he intended them to adopt. He now worked, as he explained, a Territory—whence his style and title—but such distinctions, you understand, are not won in a day. I gathered that he had started working at the early age of thirteen, since which time he had never had a dollar's worth of assistance from anybody. Sometimes, he confessed, he had fallen upon very evil days. But he obtained a post in a travelling circus, and thence rose by degrees to be manager of a theatrical

company. When the Moving Picture craze came along he perceived that there were possibilities in that field. And so he now ran a territory.

"And what might a territory signiy?" I inquired here.

He proceeded to explain at great length, lighting a cigar that, mindful of the Major's habits, I gave him at this point.

Moving pictures, he admitted, were very good in their way, as a groundwork, a substratum on which to build an elegant entertainment. By themselves they were a thought monotonous for the intellectual spectator, besides being somewhat trying to the eyes. Appeal at intervals to the ears, and you double the source of amusement, affording also an opportunity for the organs of sight to recover their tone. Hence it had occurred to him (or perhaps to some other genius—he was not invariably pellucid) to intersperse with the ordinary cinematograph show a series of vaudeville acts. They took the largest places of entertainment in each town, charged ten cents a head, and played the year round to crowded houses. He begged me to attend a performance that afternoon, and give him my candid opinion as to the merits of the show.

I went. In my humble opinion the pictures were considerably the better part of the entertainment, but I did not think it necessary to say so to my friend the territorial when he cross-examined me afterwards. I said it was remarkably good value for the money—as indeed it was. We opened with a ball-puncher, to music, followed by the story of "How Little Nellie Saved Her Sick Mother," by selling her favourite doll to buy medicine. The simple pathos of this story without words moved a young lady behind me to sob audibly. Then we had a man and woman in a song and dance act, which did not appeal to me very strongly, and another series of moving pictures, with a great deal of rifle-firing and sudden death—an Indian story. Finally came two acrobats—quite fair performers in their class.

"Don't you find these turns come rather expensive?" I asked my friend.

"No, sir! Now I'll tell you something," he began again. I listened while he unfolded the secrets of his trade. Apparently your vaudeville artist is a more thrifty animal than I had supposed. Regular employment is hard to get in his business, and so fond is he of work that he

will cheerfully accept a third of his ordinary salary if he can thereby secure a continuous engagement. This is where the territorial system, if I may so call it, comes in. My informant's territory apparently extended over half the Dominion, and stretched southwards to include some of the largest American cities. He could take on a troupe of performers for a year and work them steadily round his circle without visiting the same place twice ; then, if convenient, he could pass them on to a brother officer in command of some other territory. There was, I gathered, money in the business for both parties to the agreement.

But Quebec was a difficult place to cater for in the way of amusement. The audiences did not understand English well enough to care for the comic song—usually the strong suit of a vaudeville performance. And it was a one-horse place, anyway. The number of priests in the town seemed to annoy him. And then we happened to strike it on Thanksgiving Day, and all the banks were closed. Not that this really mattered to him, he was careful to explain : he could get money anywhere, so long as there was a box-office within call. I felt it incumbent on me to

cheer him by taking him up to the "Frontenac" bar and joining him in a Scotch high-ball. There we sat at one of the little tables while he poured more information into my receptive ears. He ranged widely—from the Immortality of the Soul to Chicago.

"Now I'll tell you something about Chicago," he said, with impressive inconsequence. "It has fifty-four miles of bullivars." He paused, to repeat in a moment, "Fifty-four miles."

I expressed becoming surprise, wondering what in the world a bullivar might be. Later I discovered that he meant boulevards.

The population of Quebec have a very foreign air, due in great part, no doubt, to the presence of the Roman Catholic element that so annoyed my friend the Territorial. The students of the Seminary of Quebec and of Laval University permeate the place: their appearance is distinctly French. With the exception of these, the chief product of the town appears to be a book called *The Golden Dog*, or more usually, *Le Chien d'Or*. The author's name (of which I regret to say I was ignorant before my visit) is Kirby; and in Quebec, at all events, he must rank as one of

the "best sellers" ever known. His historical novel is on sale at almost every shop in the town. An effigy of the mythical hound is built into the wall of the post office, which occupies the site of the old Chien d'Or building wherein dwelt the hero of Mr. Kirby's work.

IX

NOTES ON THE CITIES OF EASTERN CANADA

THE stranger might be pardoned for imagining that the Canadian Pacific Railway owned the Dominion. As a fact, they do own a considerable slice of it—a mile or so on either side of the track right across the continent—to say nothing of most of the big hotels in the chief towns. The "Château Frontenac" is theirs at Quebec; the "Windsor" at Montreal (where they have two big stations of their own), the "Alexandra" at Winnipeg, and the "Empress" at Victoria, to name no others. But it is at Montreal that you see and hear most of the great line. This, the First City in the Dominion, as it is proud of calling itself, has a reputation for hospitality, not undeserved, if I may judge from my own experience. A prominent official of the C.P.R., to whom I had brought a letter of introduction, invited me to luncheon the day before I left for Quebec. It was the most protracted and varied meal I have

ever encountered. We sat down at one and did not rise from the table until half-past six. In justice to the conversational powers of my host (and perhaps also to the excellence of the champagne), I must admit that I was surprised to find it was so late.

Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto—I have seen them all now, and I have been struck by very much the same features in all three. The order in which I visited them is also the order of their completeness. Montreal is a city in the making, bearing upon its face unmistakable signs of recent and continuous expansion. Several of the streets, after a storm of rain, are mere mud-holes. With many fine buildings there are still standing a large proportion of old wooden huts, soon to be swept away. Some of the open spaces are well laid out: others are still roughly fenced with dilapidated palings. Everywhere are rough, unsightly wooden poles, carrying cables and wires: everywhere the rails for the surface cars are forcing up the street paving blocks—sometimes in dangerous-looking fashion. But these are incidentals, inevitable to a growing city. In a few years' time Montreal will assuredly be worthy of its situation, which is magnificent.

Montreal held the dignity of being the seat of the Canadian Government from 1844, for a period of five years. Then the mob arose, and burned down the Parliament buildings, with the consequence that Toronto succeeded for a space of three years. Quebec was made the capital in 1852, and the seat of Government finally transferred to Ottawa in 1865. Montreal is perhaps a little sore on the subject. At the present time, in spite of its age, size, and political importance it is not even the capital of its own province, which happens to be Quebec. It has to console itself by reflecting that it is, at any rate, the capital of the C.P.R.

Ottawa is more complete than Montreal, probably because it is not growing so rapidly. The streets are better: there are fewer wooden sidewalks: it has altogether a more settled air, as of a city with an established reputation that can afford to take its time and expand with deliberate dignity. The Government buildings, on the summit of a bluff overlooking the Ottawa river, are very fine; and the view from the winding path at their back rivals that from Dufferin Terrace at Quebec. On the far side of the river is the town of Hull, the original settlement from which Ottawa itself has sprung. Tradition has

it that the hills on the far side, where the city now stands, were transferred to a teamster, one Sparks, in settlement of a debt of two hundred dollars. The teamster's bargain is commemorated in Sparks Street, which contains the best shops. On the right hand, as you look across the river from the back of the Parliament buildings, is the Rideau canal, descending into the Ottawa in a series of locks. Further away to the right, but invisible round a curve, the Rideau river enters the Ottawa at the Rideau Falls : about an equal distance on the left are the Chaudière Falls, where the Ottawa descends some fifty feet over narrow ledges of rock. These falls provide power for the saw-mills, which turn out some two hundred and fifty million feet of lumber annually. They also provide electricity for heating, lighting, and driving the whole tramway system of the city.

They say Toronto is the most like an American city of the three. The men who tell you this are chiefly Americans, and they mean it as a compliment to the town. They intend to signify that it is laid out in regular and orderly fashion. But the medical men will tell you also that the slums down by Lake Ontario are among the worst in

the world. At Toronto, for the first time since entering Canada, I found the English-speaking races in the ascendant, and heard, as might be expected, many stories reflecting upon the political misdeeds of the other side. The general opinion seemed to be that the French Canadian had enjoyed his full share of political power, and it was high time for some one else to have his turn. The centre of gravity was shifting: the west and the prairie cities were clamouring for their share. I have heard some assert that Winnipeg will ultimately become the centre of administration—the capital of the Dominion. Certainly it has the advantage of a central situation—and the disadvantage of being separated from the coast by so many leagues of lake and forest. Winnipeg will undoubtedly become an immense distributing centre for the prairie provinces. It will be the Chicago of Canada, but I hardly expect to see it the seat of government.

Inhabitants of our small island are apt, however, to hold exaggerated notions as to the importance of mere distance. A month's travel on this continent, and we cease to regard a few hundred miles as anything out of the common. From Toronto I went, in a day, to Niagara Falls

and back—a distance of more than a hundred and sixty miles—and thought nothing of it, so readily had I become acclimatised to the common feeling of the country.

Nearly everybody who sees the Falls for the first time confesses to a disappointment. This is the price that Niagara has to pay for its celebration by so many eminent writers in the past. I did not choose a particularly favourable day for my own visit. It was in early November, and the first snow of the season came almost as I descended from the over-heated train at Niagara Falls station. Thereafter it was variable, sunshine alternating with sharp flurries of snow and sleet. The guides, cab-drivers, and other hangers-on seemed frozen and dispirited—not unnaturally. The ubiquitous trolley car has put an end to the extortionate profits they used to reap in old days. For my own part I saw all that I wanted to see in less than three hours at an expenditure of half a dollar. But, like many other great sights, I think the Falls should be lived with for a time if they are to be appreciated at their true value.

As I stood on the Canadian side, watching the American falls directly opposite, a man came up behind me and proffered statistics in a half-

hearted and apologetic fashion. I wonder if this passion for figures is a delusion on the part of the great army of conductors, or really due to an inexplicable desire of the public mind. Can anyone wish to know the actual height of the Falls in feet and inches, the amount of water they send over in the course of an hour, the rate at which they recede up the river annually? But I did not check my informant: he seemed so genuinely glad to find a solitary listener.

X

GOING WEST

I THINK it was the Major who was continually urging me to waste no more time than I could help in the effete East. Perhaps I have forgotten to state that we ran across each other in Montreal and again at Quebec. He used to descend suddenly, when I least expected him, and be off again with equal rapidity. Quebec did not please him, but I fancy he did something in Montreal, and at Toronto he had already been settled some time when he rang me up over the telephone one morning. I walked over to see his quarters shortly afterwards.

"I thought I might find you there," he explained, naming the hotel that he had recommended to me before starting. I noticed, by the way, that he was not staying there himself, and commented on the fact. Like most of his race, he is very much the creature of impulse. It seems that he was walking along from the station, carrying his grip, when this hotel struck his eye :

it looked to him a good one, and he went in and engaged rooms. They certainly compared favourably with mine.

He was starting for Winnipeg that morning, but not by my route. He has to visit the twin cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, where no doubt he will seek to enlist local rivalry in his service. The two towns are too large and too close together to be the best of friends. Practically they join, although their centres are ten miles apart. St. Paul is the capital of Minnesota, whereas Minneapolis is the largest city of the state. Possibly for this reason she is the more jealous of the two, for the capital can always fall back upon its official superiority. At any rate, it is recorded (on the Major's authority) that a whole congregation of Minneapolitans arose and left the church at which a celebrated stranger was preaching, because he was incautious enough to select a text from one of the epistles of St. Paul.

I saw the Major off at the station that morning and bade him farewell once more. It seems to me that we are always bidding each other goodbye, and always, by some extraordinary coincidence, meeting again. When I left him at New

York, setting out for Montreal by way of the Hudson river, I thought it unlikely that I should see him again; when I left for Quebec, nothing was further from his thoughts than a journey to that ancient and sober city. I am glad to see him anywhere, but the fervour of our leave-taking must needs diminish at each fresh parting. The first time, it may be, we grasped hands with a certain amount of half-suppressed emotion. "Well! I suppose we may meet at Vancouver or San Francisco," we would say doubtingly. Even the second or the third time we wondered in our hearts whether this would not be our last handshake before reaching home again. But now, I think, we have recognised the inevitable. This continent is not big enough for one of us to lose the other in. We smile, almost ashamed, when the wheel of chance throws us together once more.

When he had gone, I decided that there was no particular reason for my staying in Toronto any longer.

The Winnipeg express pulls out from the Union Depot a little after ten at night. I had an upper berth in a tourist car, because I like occasionally to study economy, and also because

the ticket agent assured me that it was just as good as the standard sleeper. I confess that my car did not impress me very favourably at first. It seemed to be almost entirely occupied by women and babies. The latter woke me up very early in the morning, and the former tried to persuade the coloured porter to shut all the ventilators. Also, an upper berth in a train is a much harder proposition to tackle than the novice imagines. I had never tried one before, and I came to the conclusion that undressing every night in similar circumstances would make an admirable training for a professional contortionist.

The Canadian Pacific Railroad generously provides its tourist cars with miniature kitchens at one end. Next day some of my fellow passengers performed marvellous culinary feats with our range, even to the roasting of ducks. But the first night we were too late aboard to attempt any experiments of this kind; and, personally, I relied for my provisions upon the dining-car, which was far better served than any I have seen at home. I discovered a tiny smoking compartment at the end of our car, where I smoked and talked until I thought I might be able to climb

aloft without interfering with the comfort of anyone else. When I entered the swaying sleeper again about midnight the berths had all been made up and the curtains drawn. I found my place with some difficulty, dragged up the steps and climbed in. The insistent question that posed me then was, where to stow my clothes for the night. It is a question that I have not solved to my complete satisfaction yet.

Undressing was a difficulty: dressing the next morning was all but an impossibility. Lying in a semi-recumbent position I managed to shuffle on enough clothes to descend in comparative decency. Then I hurried to the washing compartment and finished dressing myself in an upright position, which was something. Then I discovered that I had thoughtfully packed my razor in my trunk. The prospect of two unshaven mornings in that train filled me with horror. Fortunately, I made friends with a young clergyman, just out from England, who lent me his shaving tackle the second morning. By that time I was abject. Unlike Samson, I recover my self-esteem only when my superfluous hair is removed. That shave—I operated on my chin somewhere in the neighbourhood of Kenora

—was worth at least twenty dollars in added self-respect.

The inhabitants of Kenora have selected that sounding name to replace that of Rat Portage, by which their little town was originally known. I suppose the same influences are at work in these wilds of lake and forest as in our London suburbs, where the inhabitants are always endeavouring to replace some good old-fashioned historic name by something that sounds to their ears more euphonious and aristocratic. Thus has Wormwood Scrubs been metamorphosed into St. Quentin's Park, and the greater part of Hammersmith has adopted the smug gentility of West Kensington. Kenora is a pretty name enough, but unfortunately it happens to be indistinguishable, as far as pronunciation goes, from that of another town lying further north. Rat Portage seemed to me far more characteristic. Like Moose Jaw, Medicine Hat, Kamloops, and a few others, it lent a flavour to the route we were travelling. With all respect for the *obiter dictum* of William Shakespeare, there is often a great deal in a name.

For two whole nights and the better part of two days we steamed steadily onwards, past pine,

spruce, birch and water—particularly water. Now everything was powdered lightly with snow; in a few hours the drifts would become thicker, the branches of the trees bend lower; again an hour or two, and the same thin, powdery carpet would be spread lightly before us. Here and there we would pass through long stretches of country where the tree trunks stood tall, gaunt, leafless, with scarcely a twig upon them, like so many telegraph poles—victims of some forest fire. And everywhere lakes, pools, sheets of water—sometimes open and sometimes frozen over. We left Toronto at nightfall: we passed Port Arthur and Fort William soon after midnight; and consequently our impression of the wildness and vastness of the country was no doubt intensified. Only at long intervals was there a change in the unending panorama of lake and forest—a tiny clearing in the woods, a lumber camp by the side of some sheet of water; once every two or three hours would be visible a cluster of wooden huts, a little wooden church, and a knot of residents standing at the station to see the train come in. This, I take it, is the chief amusement of the day in most of these little settlements.

It was about noon on the second day that we began to notice once more indications of cultivation. Occasional strips of ploughed land or of stubble appeared on either side. We were leaving the forest and entering upon the prairie ; and at last, as the train swung across the Red River and entered the big station of Winnipeg, the size of the whole place oppressed us. It seemed so long since we had seen anything larger than a shed or two and a cluster of wooden huts.

Astounding is the city of Winnipeg—the more astounding for the sudden contrast with all that has gone before. For at the end of two nights and days or thereabouts the traveller begins to be suitably impressed with a sense of the distance he has covered, and he knows that for the whole of that time he has seen nothing to indicate more than the sparsest population. And then, suddenly, he arrives at a city built of stone, with streets wider than those of Paris or Berlin, up and down which an endless procession of electric cars run incessantly. Fine stone buildings are everywhere : banks line either side of Main Street ; newspaper offices rear their lofty heads : fur-capped policemen on point duty stamp at every corner to keep their blood circulating in the biting wind. A city,

beyond a doubt, planted down here as if by some caprice of the gods, at the gates of the prairie. And to reach it we have travelled fourteen hundred miles or more, past interminable forest and an unending succession of lakes.

Winnipeg has the reputation of being the sunniest city in the Dominion, averaging, I believe, something over three hundred days of sunshine in the year. Certainly it kept up its average during the few days I was there. Rising the next morning, and looking out from my lofty window in the Alexandra Hotel, I could see the city laid out flat below me like a map, glittering in the sunlight under a blue sky, fading in the distance into a flat, brown horizon of arable land and still uncleared scrub. There it stood—a city, with its city hall, Government buildings, gaol, public library and the rest—an outpost of civilisation on the fringe of the forest. Truly an astounding place, Winnipeg, forty years ago known as Fort Garry, and boasting a population of two hundred and fifty souls.

XI

WINNIPEG, CALGARY, AND A NEWSBOY

I HAVE come to the conclusion that the prairie must be peopled almost entirely by Scots. This is, no doubt, a hasty generalisation, based on insufficient premisses (the Professor warned me against them long ago in far New York), but certainly it looks like it at first sight. Nearly every stranger I meet speaks in a tongue that betrays his parentage, and reminds me of the five years or so that I once spent north of the Tweed. "Hullo, Mac!" is the almost invariable greeting at Winnipeg when two residents come together in the spacious lounge of that remarkable hotel. And the names beginning with this tell-tale prefix occupy a number of pages in the telephone directory that would do credit to Aberdeen or Inverness—if, indeed, these ancient cities have yet discovered the utility of telephones at all. I do not think they possessed many when I was last in their neighbourhood.

The great virtue of Winnipeg lies in its

spaciousness. This is where the new city gets, if it is wise, one great pull over the old. It has, or can have, lots of room : it can afford to plan its streets and buildings on a generous scale to the lasting benefit of posterity. Ardent advocates of perfection assert that they ought also to take heed early to other matters of importance, such as the abolition of overhead wires. An electrical expert with whom I travelled to Calgary afterwards was very strong upon this point. Some day, he maintained, the Government would insist on all wires being laid underground, and the expense that would fall upon the generation that had to tackle this job would stagger humanity. The sooner it was put in hand the better for all parties. So far as gentlemen of his own profession were concerned I did not dispute his assertion.

From my own observation, I should say that the two most profitable professions in the prairie towns were those of the furrier and the estate agent. The first ambition of every immigrant is to possess a fur coat and cap—an outfit no doubt as necessary as it is picturesque. A resident of more than half a year's experience would consider himself disgraced in the eyes of his fellows if he did not own at least a fur-lined jacket. In fact,

your social status at Winnipeg can almost be measured by the length of your fur coat. The very loafers in the streets wear them—in a very truncated form, it is true. And the next epoch in the immigrant's career is surely marked by the purchase of a town lot, probably in some remote section that fancies itself next on the rota for rapid development.

By all accounts it is a difficult matter to go wrong in buying real estate in this fortunate land, in spite of the eagerness of agents to develop new town sites. They spring up day by day, wherever there is a rumour that a new railroad is coming, or where some confluence of rivers seems to point out a likely place for future settlement. Probably some day a town will arise in the vicinity of this carefully surveyed patch, but it would be unsafe to assume that it will take just the form in which it appears on the agents' elaborate maps. The railroad engineers have a good deal to say in the matter, and until it is known for certain just where their track is going, the man who buys is taking a leap in the dark. He buys, none the less, from Halifax to Vancouver, and the probability is that he makes money over the deal, provided that he can hold on to his

purchase for a few years. The growth of these prairie cities, when once they begin to move, is astonishing.

From Winnipeg to the coast of British Columbia the talk is all of the remarkable sums made in this land traffic. Some advocate prairie land, some town property or building lots, but all are agreed that it is a safe and easy method of making money. With some difficulty I resisted the many tempting propositions that were made to me on my journey to the coast. Speculation has its charms for most of us : it seemed almost a crime to lose the opportunity of gambling on a certainty ; but, fortunately or unfortunately, I could not lay my hand on enough money to make it really amusing. Besides, one ought to be on the spot to secure the best bargains, and to watch the value of an investment slowly mounting from hundreds to thousands.

By way of an economical experiment, I did the next stage of my journey, from Winnipeg to Calgary, without securing a berth in the sleeper. An ingenuous fellow-traveller had been at pains to assure me that the chair-car was much more comfortable ; in fact, he always chose its fresher atmosphere in preference to the over-heated air

of the other; and he was good enough to show me a pleasant method of arranging the seats so that I could lie down comfortably during the night. For about half the journey I agreed with him. But at Regina came an influx of midnight passengers, and we had a rude awakening. In five minutes every seat in the car was occupied, and I had to spend the remainder of a sleepless night faced by two long-legged and eupeptic Scots who had brought with them a supply of provisions calculated to last any two ordinary men for a week. Until we reached Calgary, the next evening, they ate apples and sandwiches, and drank alternate draughts of whisky and bottled beer, without cessation. They were a credit to the health-giving properties of the prairie.

Calgary is a smaller Winnipeg, confident of its ability to rival its big sister in size and importance—some day. It is laid out according to the best models, with a central street running north and south, a central avenue east and west, and other streets and avenues numbered in the most orderly fashion from these centres. I put in a day or two there because I had a letter of introduction to a man who was starting a big

"department store" in the town. It says something for Calgary's prospects that he elected to build there rather than in Edmonton, its chief rival to the north. There are those who say (and they are not all Edmontonians) that when the new railway is completed Edmonton will leave Calgary standing still. Let the Calgarites look to it! They and their partisans have at any rate the retort that Calgary is the capital of the province, and shows no signs of standing still at present. Indeed, her corner lots, in the more eligible positions, are steadily doubling their value every three or four years. I may be unintentionally exaggerating, but my friend gave me details with reference to his own scheme that were sufficiently startling.

From the streets of Calgary, looking westward, you discern a whitish glow in the sky, above the green slopes of the foot-hills. When, after luncheon, I was taken to see my friend's new building, and hoisted up to the roof in a very rough and ready workman's elevator, at a most disquieting pace, I beheld the snowy and serrated ridge of the Rockies stretching in a magnificent semicircle across the horizon. I think this prospect interested me a good deal more

than the prospects of the business-house upon the unprotected top floor of which I was standing. Yet these, too, were not without romance. Half a year ago this was merely a plot of land ; in another half year it would be a vast emporium for the inhabitants of a province to use ; travellers from distant lands would call there to display their goods and ask for orders. They were arriving already, and being interviewed in the temporary office from ten to four.

The inhabitants of the prairie provinces are anxious enough to buy, as I learned from the talkative newsboy whom I encountered, I think, during my sleepless journey to Calgary. Most newsboys are talkative, when properly handled, but this one was quite exceptionally anxious to acquaint me with the secrets of his profession. By his account, the Scandinavian immigrant was the best paying proposition on the road. To the outsider, at first sight, an immigrant train might not seem to contain a great deal of money, but this only proves the fallaciousness of judging by appearances. The Scandinavian, it seems, comes over well equipped with money, presumably scraped together for the purpose of stocking his homestead in the prairie, and he is

powerless to resist the first real opportunity he has had of spending his wealth. Also, he is not too well acquainted with the coinage of the country. A quarter appears to be the smallest piece of which he has cognizance. When these noble fellows get together in the train and begin to play cards, it is the custom for the winner to stand a round of lemonade after every hand or so, at a dollar the four glasses. There was good profit in this, as you may imagine. And then, towards the end of the journey, when they felt that the end of their long penance was in sight, they would buy up everything the boy had in stock. Books of views, photographs, chocolate, boxes of figs—everything went like hot cakes at any price a reasonable newsboy could bring himself to demand. It is likely that the homestead had to go a bit short of stock for the first year or so.

And then there were the farmers from the Edmonton or Saskatoon district, taking their annual holiday after the harvest was safely gathered in. These were not, like the others, a constant source of income, but while they lasted they would buy anything you had and ask for more. They were out for spending money, and this was their first chance in the year. This

was the time to dispose of really good stock—gilt-edged gift-books at five dollars apiece, and things of that sort. The newsboy licked his lips meditatively. He told me fabulous tales of the amounts he had made, clear profit, in a single run, selling out his stock two or three times over, and replenishing his storeroom in the corner of the baggage-van at the various depots along the line. For the Canadian Pacific Railroad, apparently, run their own newsboy service, as they run their own standard sleeping-cars. My friend worked on a commission. But I gathered that it was not impossible for a smart man to "carry one or two lines" of his own, under the rose, and reap therefrom a reasonable addition to his income. Any way, he had saved enough to buy a corner lot in Winnipeg. I think he told me that he was going to build a large book-store.

If half he told me were true (and he was circumstantial enough to enforce credulity at the time) the profession of newsboy should be a ready road to wealth. Probably he would have talked less if he had not already decided to retire. For a few minutes I found myself wondering whether the C.P.R. would consider my application for his post.

XII

ACROSS THE ROCKIES—WITH A NOTE ON DRUMMERS

My train started from Calgary at about five in the afternoon, and it was three hours later when we reached Banff and began our tortuous climb over the Rocky Mountains. It was a wonderfully bright moonlight night, and I spent very little indeed of it in bed. In fact, this was the night that I ought to have gone without a sleeper. When at last I did turn in, I sat up in my berth for some hours—until we had passed Glacier—and woke up early at Revelstoke, with a cold in the head to remind me that we had exchanged the bracing winds of the prairie for the moister and warmer air of the Pacific Slope.

I do not know what train I should recommend the traveller to take over this route, if necessity compels him (as I was compelled) to go through to Vancouver without a stop on the road. I began to recognise now that my advisers had been in the right, and that I had wasted valuable

time in the east which might have been more profitably employed here. One ought to stop for a night at Laggan, and at Field, and at Glacier House (if that place happens to be open); and get off at Revelstoke for a trip to the mining town of Nelson and back, by Arrowhead and Robson and the Kootenay river. But one cannot do everything; and if something has to be missed it becomes a question of choosing between the Rockies and the Selkirks on the one hand, and on the other the Thompson river and the scenery of the Coast Mountains. The traveller cannot always count upon a moon like ours of that wonderful November night. If he must lose something, I suppose he should elect to reach Banff in the early morning. But I should have been sorry to miss the Great Shuswap Lake, round and about whose radiating limbs we steamed for the greater part of the next day; and the Black Canyon and Lytton, where the Thompson and the Fraser join hands for their final sweep to the sea.

It was raining when at last we reached Vancouver, something after eleven o'clock at night, and it continued to rain with a steady persistence most

of the two days that I spent in that growing city. Also a fog hung over the harbour in an irritating fashion, so that it was impossible to see the full glories of the place. But there was no lack of residents able and willing to impart information on this congenial subject. British Columbia is the land of hope; the colonist there is stoutly convinced of the excellence of his chosen land. Here, too, the land agent and surveyor are well to the fore; new town sites are marked out day by day, and the papers are filled with advertisements, urging subscribers not to let the golden opportunity escape. "You missed the last chance; do not miss this one," is the burden of their cry.

I spent some time walking about the splashing sidewalks, examining the shop windows, but chiefly I sat in the hotel lounge and conversed with amiable strangers. At Vancouver it is easy to become acquainted with your fellows, for the simple reason that the tables in the dining-room are mostly provided with four seats. Following the head-waiter, who meets you at the entrance, you take the chair he provides for you and make the best of your companions for the meal—perhaps, if the Fates are kind, over a cigar after-

wards. It is not a bad arrangement, because you are almost compelled to converse with a fresh partner every time. And however unpromising your acquaintance may look at first sight, it is rare indeed to find a man from whom something cannot be learned. The difficulty is —to start him talking on the subject that he knows.

What can a man learn of a continent by running across it in a railroad car? This, I suspect, is what some of my friends will say to me when I get home again; it is probably what I would have said myself a few months ago. But I begin to see that it is often possible to learn more about a town on the cars than by staying in it for a week or so. If I had remained in Calgary, for example, I might have become infected with the idea prevailing there that Calgary was the only town in the district worth considering; if I had stayed much longer in Vancouver I should have been compelled to believe that Vancouver was bound to become the biggest port on the Pacific coast. Listening to some of these ardent talkers in the train, I was able to adopt a saner and a juster view. Men pointed out to me (with that wonderful flow of statistical information that

seems to be the birthright of every citizen of the North American Continent) the rival claims of Edmonton and Saskatoon, of Seattle and Portland. There is a healthy spirit of emulation among all these towns. They watch the growth of each other's census returns with jealous eyes. And each one of them is firmly convinced that to her, and to her alone, belongs the future.

There is this about a long journey—an affair of two or three days and nights—that it gives a chance to the student of character to arrive at a certain intimacy with his victims. On a short run of a few hours one has barely time to gain more than a superficial impression. I have come to the conclusion that the real pleasure of travel lies in the encounter with a constant succession of strange persons. The track of the C.P.R. is memorable to me now more by the men I met than by the places I saw. A long gallery of photographs still remain in my mind—some of them faint and rapidly fading, but others that I shall not soon forget. Mining managers and inspectors, farmers and butchers and fruit-growers, hotel proprietors and speculators in building lots—they all had something to say on the great subject of the land in which they dwelt.

Of course there were innumerable "drummers." The commercial traveller, as a rule, is credited with few ideas outside his own particular business. His name has, rather unfairly, become a synonym for base materialism; to have the soul of a bagman is—to have no soul worth mentioning at all. But I certainly met one specimen whose character was altogether at variance with these traditions. We made friends at Winnipeg, and met again later at Victoria, and I think we were both glad that chance had thrown us together once more. He narrated to me, by instalments, the story of his life; and, incidentally, gave me a considerable insight into the troubles that beset a bagman's daily round. I had never supposed the career to be exactly a bed of roses. But apparently the trouble was not chiefly with the clients upon whom he had to call. They were reasonable enough, and seldom treated him with discourtesy. What a drummer has most to fear is the treachery of his own kind, and sometimes the incompetence or laziness of his employer.

Mr. Briggs was a little man with iron-grey hair, spectacles, a lean, active figure, and a curious habit of standing firmly in front of you

while talking, with his legs rather wide apart—almost as though he were expecting someone to butt into him sideways and attempt to upset his balance. He was, I believe, fifty-eight years of age, but he asserted vigorously from time to time that he did not feel more than five and thirty, and that a man was no older than he felt. Still, it was clear that he was worried about his age. A man nearing sixty could not be expected to continue much longer in the first bloom of youth; he should be living at home with wife and family, retired on a comfortable competence, instead of spending four-fifths of the year in strenuous travel. And the absurd thing was—he spoke of it without any trace of bitterness—that he might have retired comfortably enough a dozen years ago if he had not been a fool.

"I was an obstinate fool," he said from time to time, shaking his head and smiling as he polished his spectacles on his silk handkerchief. "My wife—the best woman in the world, sir—did her best to keep me out of it, but I would not take advice. I thought I knew better. I went into business on my own account, and in five years I lost every penny I had saved. So I had to go back into harness again, and here

I am. I was a good salesman, but I wasn't cut out for a master. I've learned that much, anyway. I've had my lesson."

The unconquered little optimist never grumbled. His creed was that this had been sent him for a purpose—that he was a better man for his financial loss; that, possibly, he would have become idle and discontented if suffered to dwell in continued prosperity. We were sent into the world to work, and it was better to work oneself out than to decay. But it was not an easy job, starting all over again at fifty-three. He had nothing to say against his present employers, but they could not be expected to treat him as he had been treated before. And it was hard when he got them good orders, and they failed to execute them, or executed them in such a fashion that the goods were declined on delivery—the source of endless trouble.

There was, for example, the sad case of the "slickers"—which appear to be oiled waterproof coats for working men. These were especially guaranteed not to stick; but the first slicker client upon whom he called on his next round, opened by showing him a letter from a purchaser demanding damages and pay for half a day for

himself and his son—time expended in opening a recalcitrant "slicker," so that it could serve the purpose for which it was intended. Briggs, incredulous, asked to be shown some specimens: was promptly conducted to the basement and handed a sample for experiment. "I couldn't get the sleeve from the body," he confessed, laughing, "with all the strength I had." It took half an hour for himself and the manager, with their united force, to open it out. "But the surprising thing was," added Briggs, with a chuckle, "that I got him to give me another order. And I'll bet a dollar they won't stick," concluded the undefeated little man.

Danger lies also in too great freedom of conversation with one's fellows. Impossible to be too careful in these matters, witness the case of the Jew drummer—an amiable enough companion —with whom he had talked freely a year or more back on this same road. Briggs himself was in woollen goods, whereas the other travelled in aluminium teapots, or something equally futile and distinct from his own line of business. Consequently, suspecting no danger, Briggs had boasted somewhat too openly of the great orders he was getting for a certain make of blanket.

On his next journey, he discovered that these blankets, on which he was chiefly relying for the success of his trip, were a drug on the market. His agile Hebrew friend had quietly added a side line of precisely similar blankets to his stock, and forestalled him. Whence it follows, that one cannot be too careful—and especially in dealing with one of the chosen race.

"Smart! Very smart business," commented my friend, not without a touch of admiration for the scoundrel who had betrayed him.

XIII

OF LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION

THE rain ceased awhile and the sun shone while I was voyaging from Vancouver to Victoria. This was fortunate, because the scenery through the intricate straits of Puget Sound is very beautiful. Woods line the shores thickly on either side, and behind are visible as background the distant mountains of Washington. The cloud effects that evening were wonderful, but presaging more rain for the morrow, which we received in full measure. It is apt to rain somewhat heavily in the island during the winter months.

The Victorian believes in British Columbia up to the hilt. Some years ago, they tell me, when the British Government decided to abandon the dockyard at Esquimalt and to withdraw the troops, there was a period of depression in the island. That may have been the case, but there are assuredly no signs of depression now. I never saw a community that seemed better pleased with the state of affairs in general than

this of Victoria. The inhabitants, one and all, were convinced that this was the one place on the surface of the earth that a reasonable emigrant should select for his home. A good climate—not oppressively dry—plenty of work for everybody, good wages, and the cost of living not too extravagant. "In the whole of British Columbia," said one resident to me at the club, where I spent a pleasant evening the second day of my visit, "there is not a single man, woman or child who need go to bed to-night cold or hungry." He asked, with pride, where I could find another country that could make with truth a similar boast. And, with the exception of parties who might be hunting or on the trail, I believe his statement was substantially correct.

My personal recollections of Victoria are of mackintoshes and umbrellas, and perpetual paddling along sopping wooden sidewalks, endeavouring to discover the whereabouts of elusive friends. I had a letter of introduction to present to a man living on the extreme outskirts of the town, and I had promised also to look up an old acquaintance, reported to be in the employment of a certain firm of building contractors. The letter of introduction I dealt with

first, not without difficulty, for the recipient lived in a road of which the numbering followed no known rule. But the house, when at length I found it, had the most charming situation imaginable. It faced the entrance of the harbour; just across the road the waves of the Sound beat against a ledge of rocks; in a little cove, some twenty or thirty yards from his garden gate, stood a boathouse, wherein he kept a yawl. From his front door, so to speak, he could set sail, when the fancy took him, out into the open ocean, headed for any port he chose. He had been up to Alaska in his little yacht, and down to San Francisco, and beyond. That wooden boathouse of his, nestling there among the rocks, gave an air of adventure to the whole of that scattered row of dwellings.

The Victorians are a kindly and a hospitable race, and the doctor (I believe he has now retired from the practice of his profession) appeared to think that my credentials gave me the right to monopolise the whole of his time while I was in the capital. Before I started on my travels I had come to regard letters of introduction rather as a nuisance than otherwise. They seemed likely to hamper the freedom of my movements,

and I fear that I discouraged several amiable friends who were proposing to provide me with further specimens. Now I wonder what my travels would have been like without them. Certainly I should have missed a great deal if I had not carried that recommendation to the Professor at New York, who again enlisted in my service this friend of his at Victoria. But I still have a sort of shyness about presenting these documents. I figure myself at home, writing busily some morning in my study, and the maid entering suddenly with an envelope. "A gentleman calling with this note, sir!" And I open it to find that some friend has written asking me to look after an acquaintance of his, visiting London for the first time. I wonder whether I should have the grace to greet the unoffending stranger half as warmly as this Victorian doctor greeted me. I hope so, but sometimes I have my doubts. He sacrificed the whole of that day to my interests, taking me some miles in a surface car to see a friend who lived at the other end of the town, putting me up for the club and introducing me to several friends there, and finally sitting up to talk with me the greater part of the night. And then I must

needs waste half another morning for him by going to say good-bye, a few days later.

I believe the doctor to be engaged in compiling an exhaustive history of the colony, for he admitted that I had interrupted him that morning in the throes of composition. He does his literary work, like the great men of old, in the easiest possible costume. Why have we degenerate moderns in England abandoned this comfortable practice? Perhaps our wives have tutored us to an absurd regard for appearances. But the gallant doctor descended to receive my untimely call in a collarless flannel shirt, open at the neck, a pair of flannel trousers, and slippered feet. I could imagine him working away upstairs in this eminently sensible costume at his self-imposed task. He was a man of immense energy. A superabundant vitality seemed to radiate from him as he paced up and down the room, smoking fiercely, pouring out a voluble stream of words. He wanted to do so many things for me that I was ashamed of myself for coming to see him again. In two minutes, he explained, he could just change into decent clothes and run me around to half a dozen other men whom I ought to know. He would have

carried me off in spite of myself if I had not explained that my boat went in an hour's time, and that I had to get my things together.

I lingered in Victoria for several days. In spite of the rain, it struck me as a very charming place, with an air of cheerful friendliness and a general conviction among all classes that the world generally was on the right lines and likely to improve rather than deteriorate. I met a great number of good fellows there, chiefly on the doctor's introduction, of whom I cherish the kindliest recollections, and from whom I extracted, no doubt, much useful information. But one and all united in saying that I ought to have gone to Nelson. I know I ought, and it galls me now to reflect that I failed to do so, merely (or chiefly) because the train happened to reach Revelstoke at the unpleasantly early hour of six in the morning. My consolation is that I shall certainly have to miss a great many other important places before I get home.

I should like to be back in the smoking lounge of that club now, with its long settee in front of the open fire, listening to the innumerable yarns that the Inspector of Mines (I believe that was his title) reeled out in the evenings for

my benefit. Did you ever hear the story of Simpson and the Remittance Men? One of these days I mean to try my own hand at it in print. But I fear it will lose the greater part of its flavour, divorced from the racy vernacular of the narrator.

XIV

MOSS FROM A ROLLING STONE

YOUNG Carey was emphatically a rolling stone. I had seen him last in London, on his return from some unpronounceable place in Northern Rhodesia, where he had found various and precarious employment for a year or so, first in some mining concern and afterwards as a maker of roads. Road building in that outlying portion of the empire was, he explained, a simple enough business. He used to draw a line through the bush and supervise the cutting of a narrow path along this line by gangs of native boys. Before Rhodesia he had been in some South African police force: before that again he had served in one of our little native wars up in the Gold Coast region. On the whole, for his years—he is barely thirty—my young friend Carey may be said to have enjoyed a certain amount of experience. When he looked me up in London his enthusiasm about Rhodesia was

remarkable. I remember buying some shares in a Rhodesian mine shortly after his visit. It is true he explained afterwards that he would not have recommended that particular purchase. I had been misled, it seems, by a striking similarity of names.

In Victoria, when I at length discovered him, Carey was more enthusiastic than ever. But I had some trouble in finding him. These rolling stones are commonly difficult to trace to their lair: in a new country the trail of desolation left in their track is soon obscured and covered up by luxuriant vegetation. I had the address of the firm for which he was supposed to be working when I left England: they referred me to another house that had engaged his services; and this again disclaimed all but a vague knowledge of his present status. Rumour had it that he was living with some friends somewhere down by the harbour, but the clerk in charge graciously furnished me with the address of the lodgings he had used a month ago. It was by this clue that I got into touch with my man. Tired of pursuing him on foot through the pouring rain, I left a message there inviting him to visit me at the hotel, for he was expected to call for his mail

that evening. He walked into the big smoking lounge of the hotel about four o'clock the next afternoon.

"Come and have a cup of tea," said Carey. "I want to show you my place. It's a knock out—finest thing you ever saw."

I recognised the old enthusiastic touch, fetched my waterproof and umbrella, and followed him out into the rain. We splashed through a mile or more of muddy streets, passed the landing stage, and turned off at last through a desolate-looking and very boggy field. In the growing darkness he discovered after some search a line of narrow planks, and led the way over a gleaming pool of water. We were on the fringe of the harbour. Then he stepped on board a dilapidated house-boat, and said with triumph :

"Here we are ! This is the kitchen : the next one is our living room. What do you think of it?"

I thought it was very damp and rather dangerous on a dark night, but did not say so. The two houseboats were moored end to end. We sidled delicately along the unprotected gangway of the second and entered, so to speak, by the front door. Inside it was pitch dark. Carey

struck a match, lit an oil lamp, and held it aloft to display the elegance of his apartment.

"It must be charming—in summer," I said tentatively.

A rusty iron stove stood in the centre of the room. Fragments of wooden boxes and other rubbish littered the floor. By the dim light of the lamp I could just make out the shadowy forms of a chair or two, a table, and a sofa. Here and there the relentless deluge outside was percolating through the roof and forming quite respectable pools of water on the oilcloth of the floor. Various articles of clothing decorated the sofa and chairs. But Carey had never been shackled by the too orderly habits of our absurdly refined civilisation. I remember my wife's anxiety as she used to sit watching him smoking in the drawing-room at home. The carpet was his ash-tray whenever he became excited in conversation.

"I wonder where the other fellows are." He called aloud, "Barnard!"

"Hullo!" came in a sleepy voice from behind a Japanese reed screen at the back of the room.

"Lazy beggar. Get up and make some tea. I've a guest here."

The unhappy Barnard presented himself in pyjamas, unshaven but unashamed, and we were formally introduced. Then he shuffled off into the kitchen, to reappear five minutes later.

"There is no tea," he announced cheerfully. "You forgot to get it in last night."

"Well, make coffee instead, then, like a good chap. And some buttered toast."

"There's no butter either."

"Jam, then." Carey laughed and turned to me. "You must take us as you find us," he explained. "I'm supposed to lay in stores on Saturday night, but I always forget when the time comes round. Barnard spends the Sabbath in bed when he can. He was out on a survey party last week. Arbuthnot—that's our other chum—is not on view to-day. Out courting, I expect. He's a bricklayer."

"A bricklayer?" I repeated. It is unusual at home to find bricklayers living in houseboats.

"Well! an assistant bricklayer, anyway. May become a bricklayer in time. Then he'll marry, I expect, and desert the Ark. Even as an assistant he gets three dollars a day, all found. I tell you, this is all right, this place. I mean to settle down here. It's a white man's country."

Carey repeated this expressive phrase a good many times in the course of that afternoon. He was full of schemes for making his fortune and expounded them to me at intervals in his jerky manner as he broke up more fragments of wooden boxes across his knee, deluged them with petroleum from a can, and lit a fire in the rusty stove. Some day there will be a conflagration in that corner of the harbour. Soon the sleepy Barnard shuffled in again, bearing coffee and hot toast, very comforting with a pot of jam after our long paddle in the rain. We sat down and discussed British Columbia—its immense resources, its admirable climate, the ease with which great fortunes were amassed there, and so forth. Barnard, still in his sleeping suit, stood by the stove and listened, occasionally throwing in a word of comment.

Yes! it was a white man's country this. And that had been the trouble with Rhodesia, with South Africa in general. Plenty of natural resources there also—gold mines, copper mines, tin mines—but Kaffirs, too many Kaffirs, and consequently cheap labour and no room for the casual white man who came out without a berth prepared for him, without a pull with the big

men at home. Whereas here they were only too glad to have you: you could pick and choose your job, and get good pay.

"What about the yellow invasion?" I put in, for they had been talking about the Immigration Act at the club the night before, and explaining how it had produced an effect precisely opposite to that which was intended. No sooner was the tax imposed, it appears, than wages advanced automatically—doubled themselves, in fact, and it became worth while for the Japanese to come in and compete with the simple Chinaman. But Carey waved all this aside: he was in no mood to detect blots on the landscape.

"Oh! that's nothing," he said airily. "It don't amount to a row of pins."

He went on to tell me of his own plans for the future. He had organised a small syndicate and bought up some land in a place where a new railroad was coming. Next week he was going up there to survey his purchase and mark it out into lots for sale. It was going to be a big thing—one of the biggest things in the country. In a year his site would be covered with buildings: in five years it would be the centre of a flourishing town; in ten, a city. There could

be no doubt about this at all—not the slightest risk—for innumerable reasons, which he proceeded to give me at great length. He had inside information from the very highest sources: he had seen the plans of the railroad: he knew exactly where the depot was to be situated. All he had to do was to buy up the most eligible locations, with the syndicate's money, and await the multiplication of his capital a hundredfold. Now, if I cared to put in a few hundred dollars. . . .

It sounded very tempting, but I contrived to evade the hint. I have got in on the ground floor (as my friends call it) so often, and with such uniformly unsatisfactory results that I am grown a trifle shy of these high-sounding propositions. I switched the conversation neatly on to the cost of living, and Carey plunged gaily into figures.

"It's all right if you go about it the right way," he explained. There were three of them, and they had hired the old house-boat for practically nothing. Not only that, but they had a space on either side which they let out as moorings for a couple of steam launches. We were reminded of this shortly afterwards by one of

them bumping violently into us, whereupon we all sallied out into the rain and assisted to tie her up. I learned that the swell from the Seattle steamer had been known to lift the old Ark (as they profanely termed their dwelling) so that the iron ring to which she was attached slipped off the pile. The story ran that the Arkites had been roused from sleep one morning to find their home nosing about among the vessels on the opposite shore of the harbour.

I liked young Carey. May he preserve his divine gift of enthusiasm unimpaired to the confines of old age! It was pleasant to sit there in the semi-darkness and listen to his glowing projects. There were fortunes in every enterprise he discussed. I remember he insisted on my accompanying him the next morning to the city museum, that I might see with my own eyes a certain gigantic halibut in a glass case. He wished me to interest some capitalists at home in that halibut. Here they were—thousands of them—lying off the coast, only asking to be caught, ranging in weight from anything up to two hundred pounds. (I refer to the fish, not to the financiers.) And they fished for them, he asserted, with lines. "The trouble with these

people," said young Carey, "is that they think they have nothing to learn. No good trying to tell them anything: they won't listen—simply laugh at you. Now if you could interest some of your friends at home in this fishery, and get them to send out a fleet of steam trawlers. . . ."

Thus he expatiated. For all I know there may be some truth in what he said. I saw his specimen fish, and it was indubitably an imposing animal. But I am too old to cast my nets into strange waters. What do I know of the art and practice of trawling, and where are my wealthy acquaintances in the ship-owning line? Carey will have to find someone else to help him in this project, unless some capitalist in the fishery business happens to read these paragraphs.

XV

SIMPSON AND THE REMITTANCE MEN

"As to rich strikes," said the Inspector of Mines, "I have seen one or two in my time and heard of a great many more."

I am not giving the gentleman his real name, because I have forgotten it. But I gathered that it was his pleasant duty to examine and report on the minerals of the province. An interesting profession, bringing him to strange places and into contact with strange men. As he said, if he had not been paid for doing it, he would have considered it a sufficiently amusing occupation.

"There was my friend Collins," he went on, in reminiscent mood. "He struck it rich up Alaska way, somewhere near the border. Took out twenty thousand dollars' worth of stuff in two days—and then dropped every cent of it trying to prove the vein. Just a pocket. He might have taken out all the stuff that was any good in a wheelbarrow."

"I suppose he never smiled again."

"Not a bit of it. That's just where you make the mistake. He often talks of that strike now. Those two days were the happiest in his life. He went about thinking of all the things he would do with his millions. Said it was grand to look out to sea and think of his steam yacht lying out there waiting his pleasure, ready to run him over to the old country whenever he had a mind to go. That's the first ambition a man has when he strikes it rich out here—to go back and spend his money at home."

It may have been this remark that led me to say something about the possibility of separation.

"If Canada ever cuts loose from the Mother Country," said the Inspector impressively, "it will be due to the Remittance Man."

And then he waded in with the story of Simpson at the Calgary Club.

"As you say, the Remittance Man may seem a harmless sort of animal enough, but when he once gets fairly started he can be the biggest bore on the face of the earth. Back there in Calgary, when I was in that district some years ago now, the boys were fed up with them to that extent they didn't know which way to look.

These young fellows used to hang about the club all day and most of the night, and their talk was all of the big bugs they knew at home —the Duke of this and the Earl of that, and not a soul without a handle to his name of some sort or other. By the way they talked you'd wonder why they ever came out to Canada, when they could get the best of everything at home, staying at the best houses as long as they chose, shootin' and fishin' and huntin', and the rest of it. And one evening they were all sitting in the smoking-room as usual, capping one another's stories and getting a grade higher in the nobility every time, when old Simpson happened along."

He paused for a moment, so I started him off again by saying, "Who was old Simpson?"

"He was a big farmer down that way. Rough old man—looked as if he'd lived on the prairie all his life. But he had a deal more ingenuity than you'd think." He laughed quietly in reminiscence. "He tumbled to the game right sharp, soon as he'd hitched his old horse to the rails and come in, and he set out to beat those young scallywags on their own ground. He had a very ready invention, had old Simpson."

"'Did I ever tell you boys,' he began, taking a

seat in the circle round the fireplace where all these young fellows were blowing about their big friends, 'of the last time I paid a visit to the old country? I was a bit younger then than I am now, and Victoria was on the throne. Before I came out the old lady and I had been pretty intimate, and she had been pestering me for years to come and put in a week or so with her at the palace. Now I'm a simple sort of man, and I tell you I didn't half like the idea of stopping off at a place like that—didn't know how I should get on with all the ceremony they put in at a royal court—but it came to such a pitch that there was no getting out of it, and the next time I had business to do in London I just sent a cable along to say I was coming. Sure enough, when we drew up at the station there was the royal carriage with four horses and the grooms in red coats all waiting to catch hold of my grip and trunk, and a red carpet spread along the floor where the car pulled up, and all the people cheering along the streets as we drove off like as if I'd been the German Emperor. Well! when we got to the palace I'll own I felt a bit nervous—it was some years since I'd seen anything much of the family—and I said straight out that I hoped she wasn't inviting any

other royalties to meet me, because my company manners might have got a bit rusty, and being just off a voyage and one thing and another—well! I'd rather she didn't. But she said it was me she wanted and no one else, so it was just going to be a family party, and if I cared to do so I might take Beatrice to the play that evening, for the poor girl hadn't been seeing much lately and was feeling a bit lonesome.

"'Well, boys! I guess we had a bully time that night. We had a nice quiet family dinner all by ourselves, with just a few dukes and earls who happened around at the time, but no one of importance. And then Beatrice and I went on to the play together—real good piece it was—and when it was over I couldn't well do less than take her to the Savoy Hotel for a bit of supper. What with that and a few other things it was a bit late when we got back again, and I'll admit I felt rather queer when I found that they'd forgotten all about us and gone off to bed, locking up the house.

"'What's to do now?' I said to Beatrice, for I didn't half like the job of finding a night's lodging for the girl, so late as it was and being a stranger in the place after all those years. We knocked at

the big door for awhile, but not a soul came near us. Beatrice laughed. She didn't seem fazed at being out there alone with me, and of course it wasn't as though I had been a stranger. I'd had her on my knee when she was no higher than that table.

"'Oh! that's all right,' she said, 'Just come around here with me.' And we walked round together to the back of the palace, where she pointed out a window with a light in it. 'Take a chunk of gravel and throw it up there,' she said. So I took a handful and threw it up, two or three times. At last I hit it good and plenty, and someone pushed up the sash and thrust out a head.

"'Hullo! who's there at this time of night? What? is it you, Ned? And Beatrice? Back from the play and found them all gone to bed? Well, now, that's too bad. Wait one moment while I put my crown on, and I'll come and open the door for you myself.'"

It is said that this marvellous effort of impromptu invention completely freed the club from further reminiscences of high life on the part of the Remittance Men.

XVI

AN INCIDENT IN SEATTLE

Somehow or other I have a grudge against Seattle.

I did not see much of the Sound on my voyage to that famed city. It was cold and wet, and evening began to close in soon after we steamed out of the harbour at Victoria. The ordinary boat was not running that afternoon, and we were fobbed off, as I was told, with an inferior substitute, notorious for a cheerful carelessness in her dealings with smaller craft. An angry owner of some such vessel was down on the quay threatening our impassive skipper with legal proceedings; and we backed out so hastily that we looked like ramming the *Ark* at her moorings. Young Carey emerged hastily from his front door, and added some picturesque language of his own to the general clamour. His eloquence does credit to his varied training.

Our steamer was not so well appointed as the

usual C.P.R. boat that makes the passage from Victoria to Seattle, but it possessed a mechanical piano, which some philanthropist fed so abundantly with nickels that it scarcely rested from start to finish of the journey. There is perhaps something depressing about a musical instrument that performs automatically on the introduction of a coin into its bowels. I have no objection to the swarthy Italian and his street piano, so frequent a visitor to the secluded squares of London. It is mechanical, but behind the machine there is still a man, capable of expressing gratitude if you send him out a few pence, more or less amenable to reason if you plead the presence of an invalid in the house. With these others the commercial element insists too strongly: you put in your nickel and receive your tune, cut to a definite length, ceasing abruptly when the coin has exhausted its power. It is a prostitution of the sacred art, but America seems to enjoy it. Ingenuity appeals to her more strongly than mere beauty.

Curious it is how, in travelling, misfortunes so often accumulate at one particular spot, leaving it clouded as by a stain on the memory. Seattle is, I make no doubt, a city of importance, pos-

sessing many natural attractions : to me it remains memorable only as a place where I endured a succession of minor discomforts. It rained there assiduously, but in itself that would have been little : it had rained equally hard at Victoria, which I had just left with a real regret. But I still maintain that the authorities of Seattle might pave and light the approach to their landing-stage. When I got clear of the Customs and started to walk the few blocks to my hotel, I stepped in the darkness into a pool of water well over my ankles. Unpacking, I found that the only breakable articles in my bag were reduced to splinters ; and when, finally, I got to bed, I could not sleep for the noise of the street cars. In the road just below my window was a double crossing, over which they clanked interminably far into the night, recommencing with cheerful alacrity before the break of day. The suspense of waiting for that succession of clanks was enough to destroy the repose of a dormouse. And the next morning some miscreant stole my umbrella.

Above all things, I wish to avoid injustice. As far as may be possible, we should eliminate from our impressions all that is the result of

accident. Because my umbrella was stolen at a Seattle hotel, it would be unfair to assume that the vice of umbrella-stealing is rife in this young and enterprising city. In fact, it may even be a doubtful point whether we ought to regard umbrella-stealing as a vice at all. It is a habit sanctioned by long usage, and not infrequent in the highest circles. In the most exclusive of London clubs—even in that dusky home of bishops and respectable historians, the Athenæum—your umbrella is notoriously unsafe. But the bishop, to do him justice, will commonly restrict himself to an exchange, due, no doubt, to the imperfection of his spectacles. My Seattle robber left nothing behind him to console me for my loss. And, as I have hinted, it was a day on which some protection from the rain was highly necessary.

In these Western cities, if I may say so without offence, it is well to keep an eye on any portable property not actually attached to your person. I remember a friend at Vancouver relating to me a doleful story of his own experience at some large hotel: how he was generously engaged in writing a letter to his son, and enclosing therein (as should be the habit with all

good fathers) a twenty dollar bill. Finding himself without a stamp, he placed over the letter, to conceal it from prying eyes, his handsome fur-lined overcoat, and turned aside to the cigar store, where stamps are commonly kept on sale, to buy a few. It was not more than five paces from the table where he was writing, but when he returned, coat, letter and bill had all disappeared, never to be seen again. This story came into my mind as soon as I noticed my own loss, for I also was writing: I also had gone to purchase a few stamps, leaving my dripping umbrella standing in the waste-paper basket by my side; and I also discovered no sign of its presence when I returned, but a damp stain at the bottom of the said basket. I went straight out into the hall, intent on recovering my property, and the first sight that met my eyes was an old man with a white beard walking slowly down the steps carrying an umbrella in each hand.

What would you have done? A gallant fellow, justifiably angry and reckless of consequences, you would have no doubt seized the elderly scoundrel by the throat and snatched the ill-gotten spoil from his palsied hand. I suppose

my temper is naturally mild. I approached him with nervous haste, and said :

" Excuse me, sir ! "

And then I noticed that neither of the two umbrellas he was carrying bore any resemblance to my own.

There was nothing for it but to murmur an apology and withdraw. The old man handed half of his stock to a friend who was waiting for him in the hall, and they passed out by the revolving door into the rain side by side.

I saw no more of my umbrella. But it came upon me suddenly that I had seen enough of Seattle, and of the rain, to last me a considerable time. I felt a hunger for the sun, which I had scarcely seen since crossing the Rockies. So I borrowed an umbrella from the clerk and went out to buy a ticket. By good fortune there was an office close at hand, and a bank. I drew a hundred dollars on my letter of credit (they paid me in five gold pieces, such as Gulliver might have handled in Brobdingnag) and purchased a ticket for San Francisco by the Shasta Limited. Then I went back, feeling something more at peace with the world, and diced for

cigars until it was time to put my things together and make my way to the station.

These trifling anecdotes, you may say, do not redound greatly to the glory of Seattle or of myself. I had set out to say something handsome of the place. When we bear in mind that thirty years ago it contained less than four thousand inhabitants, and that it now claims some fifty times that number, it may be conceded that its growth has been sufficiently remarkable. They tell me that there is still living in the neighbourhood the daughter of the Indian chief from whom the town derives its name. I have no doubt that Seattle contains much to charm the visitor, in reasonable weather. If my radius of activity had not been seriously curtailed by the incident described above, I might have more to say about its architecture and general appearance. As it is, I remember only the Carnegie Library and the big totem pole that adorns one of the squares.

The South called me, but it was some time before the Shasta Limited steamed into respectable weather. We came to Portland with the shades of evening, rain still falling, and it had turned colder : we woke the next morning to find a carpet of snow on the ground. It continued

down to Shasta Springs, and finally left us only when the rugged forest scenery died away and spread into the Sacramento Valley. The screen of descending flakes seriously interfered with our view of Mount Shasta.

XVII

SAN FRANCISCO

THERE was a more than ordinarily conversational crowd on board the Shasta Limited. Every train has a character of its own : on this journey the smoking-car discussed chiefly the great question of graft and the rottenness of politics, diverging by an easy transition to tales of trusts and high finance, especially in connection with various railroads. A little knot of us had been talking over these interesting subjects for some time and scarifying several absent millionaires in a manner that gave us a pleasant sensation of virtue. What did these men want with so much money, anyway? Why could they not be content without entering into new schemes to wring more millions out of the small men? We agreed that in many cases money-making became an obsession, a disease ; the victim, when he had once tasted its fascinations, often found himself unable to abandon the pursuit of wealth. I had just began to expound my views on the subject

of individual property, and the necessity of some restriction being placed upon it in the case of land, minerals, water-power, and so forth, when a stout gentleman, who had been listening silently to us from a distant chair, rose heavily and crossed over to our corner. As soon as I had finished my next sentence he leaned forward, expectorated impressively on the floor, rubbed it in carefully with his boot, and began :

"I have been listening to your very interesting conversation for some time, and with your permission, gentlemen, I should like to butt in myself."

This was his exordium, and he delivered it with a deliberate solemnity that betrayed the practised bore. He "butted in" to such purpose that his opening sentence, describing how he was appointed to an important position on one of the railroads we had been discussing, lasted the better part of ten minutes. The little company began to melt away, unobtrusively. When I left, a quarter of an hour later, he was still mouthing mellifluous periods about the early eighties, his sole remaining audience the coloured waiter and a gentleman from Salt Lake City, who apparently cherished the vain hope of get-

ting in a few words himself, later. I do not think he succeeded. For the stranger not only had an abundance of material, but had cultivated the art of unhurried speech until his manner resembled that of a judge on the bench or of a bishop in the pulpit. He addressed his little audience as though it were a public meeting. His every word might have been fraught with matter of international importance.

I mention this little matter to show how easy is the path that leads to self-deception. When I returned to the car, about half an hour later, I found the man still orating, but apparently our friend from Salt Lake City had succeeded in switching him off to another topic. He was speaking of England and the English.

"Now I'll tell you what I thought about them," he concluded. "I conversed with a great many of that nation on the cars and in hotels, and I figured it out that they all wanted a pinch of dynamite exploded under them to make them get a move on. They are slow, sir, —dead slow. In this country we think quickly, and we speak quickly, and we get the hang of anything that's going on in quick time. But the Britisher, in my opinion, lacks snap."

There seems to be a widespread impression among Americans that we are a slow-speaking race. And the curious fact is that I thought much the same of them ; the majority of those I encountered seemed to talk with a deliberation out of all proportion to the importance of what they said.

It was already dark when we reached Benicia, known to all sportsmen as the home of the late Mr. Heenan, and embarked upon the largest ferry-boat I have ever seen, to cross the Carquinez Straits. The whole train (and it was no small one) went across at once, in two sections, side by side. I was interested to see how they gradually lowered the track on the far shore until it got down to our level—a matter of some six feet—apparently by hydraulic power. The manager of an Oregon mine, with whom I had struck up an acquaintance, explained how the thing was done. We talked together afterwards of mining matters—he seemed to be carrying innumerable specimens of ore about with him—until we finally parted at the San Francisco landing-stage at the foot of Market Street.

I did not see much of the city until the next morning.

It is well to bear in mind, say the inhabitants of San Francisco, that the earthquake of 1906 was in itself a trivial matter, not much superior in quality to many others that they had experienced before. In the future they will no doubt be able to point to something much better. It was the fire that caused, they say, the bulk of the damage. True, you may behold to this day the ruins of the City Hall, and they will not deny, if pressed, that a few other buildings were more or less seriously damaged by the shock. But it was the breaking of the water-mains that caused the real trouble, permitting the consequent fires to get beyond control, and ending in the destruction of about four square miles of buildings, chiefly in the heart of the business district. This fire, I believe, raged for about three days. The conductor who took me round in an observation car the next morning was careful to reassure his party as to the future by pointing out the big tanks that have now been raised, one in every four blocks, to prevent any recurrence of the tragedy. The city, according to him, had accepted its misfortune in the best possible spirit, and made of it a blessing instead of a curse. Since the "Great Disaster," as he perpetually

phrased it, the population had risen to five hundred thousand. "Another quake," he declared, with more than Roman fortitude, "and we shall top the million mark."

The bulk of the inhabitants, I suspect, will be glad to approach this happy consummation by an easier route. They are looking forward to the great exposition of 1915 as a means to this end, and are assured that San Francisco will be well capable by that time of entertaining respectably the myriads who will flock to see it. But there are still some ugly gaps to be filled; here and there the pavement of the sidewalk is replaced by wooden boards, and the tram-lines display unwonted curves. I think on the whole I found more visible signs of the great disaster than I had expected.

It was a beautifully sunny morning, with just a touch of chilliness in the air, and I thoroughly enjoyed my drive out to the Golden Gate and back. We went through the Golden Gate Park —a magnificent pleasaunce with abundance of green turf, pines, cedars, eucalyptus trees, and a chain of lakes—the whole artificially constructed out of an arid range of sandhills. Then we came, past the so-called Dutch Windmill, to the shores

of the Pacific, and pulled up for half an hour's rest at Lobos Point. Close at hand, almost at our feet, were the Seal Rocks, from which the promontory takes its name; away to the right, not more than a mile distant, stretched the opposite shore; and between the two, through the Golden Gate itself, a little torpedo-boat destroyer was steaming out into the Pacific. It was the first time I had set eyes on the boundless expanse of the western ocean. Just then it did not dishonour the name given it by the old navigators; its waves were lapping the beach with scarcely more than a gentle ripple.

Motor-cars in great numbers come out to the point for this view, and there are several garages for their accommodation, as well as a row of little wooden huts for the sale of candy, peanuts, and picture postcards. These detract something from the picturesque quality of the place. Yet I don't know why I should cavil at them, for I bought half a dozen of the cards myself.

We climbed once more into our car and whirled home on the other side of the park, and the conductor was soon busy with his megaphone reeling out the names of a succession of statues. I did

not pay very much attention to him on the way home, and indeed I do not think that the figures themselves were particularly remarkable as works of art. The Pacific Ocean had impressed itself upon me: it had fired me with the lust of travel. Out somewhere across those blue waves lay the South Sea Islands—Samoa, the Marquesas, a host of alluring names made familiar to us from the world of books. And, further, Sydney and the back-blocks of Australia, and the wonders of the East—Japan, India, China. What a lot there is in the world that we never see, hardly even think of seeing! And here I was, with the opportunity before me of circumnavigating the habitable globe. All I had to do was to take a berth in a liner and return to England by a different route. Having come so far, why was I turning back?

Well! perhaps in order to leave something over for next time.

XVIII

IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

It is something of an effort to me now to take my mind back to the sunshine, the fruits and flowers, the orange groves and vineyards of Southern California. Only the other day, in a manner of speaking, I was there, driving about Pasadena in a small hooded motor-car (for the Professor had given me another letter of introduction to a friend in that little town), with the most amiable of companions, the most efficient of cicerones. Measured by mere time, my distance from that lotus-eating land is trifling; measured by miles and climatic change it is immense—so immense that I have some difficulty in bringing my imagination back to reconstruct the scene. For here it is snowing hard, and my fingers are so cold that they can scarcely grasp the pen; and there, perhaps two weeks ago, we were careering gaily along the hard, dusty roads, clad in light summer clothing, past hundreds of gay gardens, with sprinklers water-

ing the bright green lawns, past houses with verandahs, where ladies or children reclined in hammocks, glad to be resting in the shade. A cloudless blue sky, a background of mauve and purple mountains shimmering in the sun, avenues of graceful pepper trees, stretches of smooth green turf sweeping unfenced from the houses to the sidewalks, perhaps with a low parapet of white stone fringed with a few palms—this is my recollection of Pasadena. I selected a villa or two in that so charming town which I intend to buy some day, when I can find the money and the opportunity, and am ready to retire from the stress and tumult of London life. I have no doubt the purchase would be a good investment now.

I thought I should like to live in Los Angeles until I saw Pasadena. And even before I came to Los Angeles I fancy I had some thought of Santa Barbara, which I passed in the train going down. It was early in the morning when we pulled up there for a few minutes, and as I looked out of the window of the Pullman I saw the sun rising from the edge of the water (for the coastline there runs nearly due east), and bathing the little town in a beautiful pearly light. I

remember, too, that we had strawberries and cream for breakfast afterwards—December strawberries.

Los Angeles was founded, I believe, by the Spaniards towards the close of the eighteenth century. The Spaniards are a ceremonious race, experts in the great art of nomenclature, and they dowered the nascent city with as many titles as a hidalgo of the highest rank. "La Puebla de Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Angeles" was its original postal address—surely the longest place-name on record. Fortunately it passed into American possession; and the Americans, with that sturdy common sense characteristic of their Anglo-Saxon forefathers, curtailed its name and extended its boundaries. It has been doubling its population with great regularity every few years since.

For variety of vegetation I think this district beats any place I have hitherto seen. But then I was taken round Los Angeles by a conductor who must have been a professional botanist, for he took pride in giving us the name of every tree, plant or flower that we came across in our excursion. We saw rubber trees, pepper trees, live oaks, many varieties of palms, century plants,

bananas, bougainvillea vines, hibiscus, poinsettia, and many others whose names I have forgotten or would rather not attempt to spell. Under his guidance the whole party of us explored one garden which had been allowed to run wild round the ruins of a burnt-out house. For Los Angeles has not escaped the epidemic of conflagrations so prevalent on the Pacific coast. Three days after the San Francisco disaster the offices of an important Los Angeles paper were destroyed by fire; and the blackened ruins were still standing when I was there. Our conductor hinted darkly at dynamite wrecking on the part of some dissatisfied workmen, and I believe his suspicion has been since proved correct.

The next morning I boarded an electric car at the big central station and went over to Pasadena to present my letter of introduction. As a matter of fact, when I arrived at the house I found I had left my letter behind, so I presented myself instead.

I discovered Mr. Hooman—let me give him a fancy name for this occasion—in the upper room of his bookstore in one of the principal streets of the town. It was eleven o'clock when I introduced myself, and I am afraid I occupied

his time until it was nearly dark, and he was kindly urging me to stay to supper and attend some function at the club afterwards. Mr. Hooman is a slight man, spectacled, with grizzled hair and beard, but I need not describe him with great particularity, because if you ever go to Pasadena you will be tolerably certain to meet him. If you do not go you are to be pitied in that you will lose a chance of making his acquaintance, but my description would be of little use to you. There is a humorous twinkle in his eye which is very engaging, and he is a man of many activities. He has travelled over the greater part of the habitable globe, observed men and cities, and recorded some of his observations in the finest set of photographs I have ever seen. A connoisseur in the best sense of that much-abused word, I fear he is rather too apt to supply the raw material for the works of other men. I wish he could be persuaded to give the world his own impressions at first hand.

The motor industry is going ahead rapidly in Southern California. Mr. Hooman had a car which was at the repairers, and was thinking of getting another.

"Max has been in trouble," he said cryptically. "But I'll telephone through, and I dare say he'll be able to run you round the town after lunch."

Max turned out to be the pet name of his car. He was still in trouble when we walked up to the garage after lunch, but Mr. Hooman was not to be daunted by little matters of that kind. Every now and then Max would pant horribly climbing some hill, and perhaps come to a dead stop three-fourths of the way up, but a skilful juggling with levers always started him off again. We pierced the town in all directions. We skirted the new quarters where the ever-busy real estate agent is hard at work developing new residential sites; finally we plunged down a steep decline into a half-made road, where Max absolutely declined to proceed further. But this was one of the things I had to see, so we got out and walked up the slope to examine the lordly pleasure grounds that a certain millionaire brewer is constructing out of the wilderness. A small army of gardeners were at work on it—had been at work, I gathered, for some time—making winding paths and waterfalls, rustic bridges, and cunningly contrived seats. A won-

derful place. You can almost see the grass growing on the watered slopes.

"With work and water you can do anything in this country," said my companion. "And water is more important than work."

Our millionaire had chosen his site well. From the summit of his sloping park he looked across a deep ravine towards the distant mountains. On the far side of the arroyo they were already building more houses—a new residential quarter promising an important addition to the town. Pasadena is expanding rapidly; the red-brown earth for miles round her outskirts is dotted here and there with vivid patches of green, where a house or two form the nucleus of another subsection, and the tenants have already set their sprinklers to work upon the lawn. All the way to Los Angeles—a matter of some ten miles—big advertising boards announce new and desirable sites for residences, under various alluring names. At present these do not add to the beauty of the landscape.

We wound Max up with some difficulty and persuaded him to mount the very rough incline once more. Along the smoother streets at the top he careered gaily enough, but we returned

him to the garage at the end of our trip none the less. The repairer had not got to the root of his hidden trouble yet.

Certainly Pasadena is a charming spot. I went there for three days in succession, and I wish I was there now. It makes me envious to reflect that men are probably walking about its sunny avenues without waistcoats, while I am struggling to nerve myself for an excursion into the snow-covered streets. I believe they were starting a lawn-tennis tournament there when I left. And I still think with affectionate reminiscence of the fruit. Raspberries from June to January, strawberries nearly all the year round. Not without reason do they call this district "the Housekeeper's Paradise." And I am conscious also that I came away without seeing all that I should of the glories of that country. I never went to Mount Lowe, up the most wonderful mountain railway in the world (as the prospectus puts it), nor to Santa Catalina Island, where the adventurous tourist can examine the marine gardens through the glass bottom of his boat, nor even to the ostrich farm, though I still possess a complimentary ticket giving me free entrance. That I did not see any of these things

is undoubtedly due to Mr. Hooman, whose society proved so interesting that I wonder I ever left Pasadena at all.

On looking back and attempting to analyse the admiration I felt for these towns of Southern California, I come to the conclusion that their outstanding feature is the spaciousness of their residential quarters. They are Garden Cities; there is nothing cramped or confined about the planning of these villas that stretch out among the surrounding hills. Indeed, Los Angeles announces proudly that it builds "by the mile"; that it has erected, in fact, some twenty odd miles of new buildings during the past year. The houses stand well apart from one another, each in its own little garden, with its own row of palm trees fringing its trim lawn. And the architects take a pride in varying the style as much as possible, sometimes to an extent that is more quaint than beautiful. On the chimneys especially they are wont to lavish their inventive powers. But the spirit is the right one. I like to see a house in some sort an expression of its owner's individuality, or of its builder's; not merely an insignificant item in a meaningless row of drab dwelling-places. I like, too, the frank attitude

of these homes, the absence of palings and of a garden gate, as though the owner were offering a cordial invitation to the passer-by to "step right in." It gives a pleasant touch of domesticity to see from the street the children playing in the verandah, the lady of the house watering her flowers or reclining lazily in her hammock as she reads the latest novel. Mr. Hooman told me that the consumption of novels in his town was considerable. I am always glad to hear of a good market for fiction.

He tells me also that Pasadena is exceptionally rich in local authors—authors, that is, of local habitation, but presumably of more than local fame. Some time ago he conceived the idea of lending his bookstore to an exhibition of their works, and inquiry disclosed the fact that there were more than forty men or women who had some claim to be called Pasadena novelists. For a moment, I confess, the news damped me, and I hesitated as to the wisdom of joining so goodly a company. Would it be possible sometimes to escape from the society of my fellow-craftsmen? Authors are a sensitive, perhaps a quarrelsome race; I doubt if it is good for them to be too much together. Yet, on reflection, I

suspect their number weighs less heavily on themselves than on the lay members of the community. Do they all draw their supplies of character-types from the immediate neighbourhood? If so, the publication of a new novel in Pasadena must be awaited by many local householders with a fearful joy.

But this is idle jesting. I do not suppose seriously that I shall ever add myself to that formidable tale of writers, or even that I shall return to Pasadena at all. It is far enough away from me now. But I shall not soon forget the little town, with its groves of orange trees lining the electric railroad, its background of mauve and purple mountains, its avenues of pepper trees with their drooping, graceful, feathery fronds. And the kindly host who displayed to me (with Max's assistance) its esoteric glories—him I hope to meet again some day when chance and his inborn lust of travel bring him from sunny California to the smoke and fogs of London.

XIX

ON THE WAY TO CHICAGO, WITH SOME REFLECTIONS ON THAT CITY

When we say airily that we have seen California we lay ourselves open to some ridicule from those who really know that remarkable country. As a general rule, we have seen the California of the tourist, and imagine (as the tourist is so apt to imagine) that the rest may be disregarded as of no particular importance. For my part, I recall in my hasty journey through the state three separate and distinct Californias—the hilly, wooded, well-watered section in the north; the orange and fruit-growing district round about Los Angeles; the arid desert between the San Bernardino Mountains and the frontier of Arizona—and I am prepared to believe that there are at least as many more. There is, for example, the Yosemite Valley, which all my friends were so anxious for me to see—especially the Major.

The Major, who turned up at Los Angeles just before I left, was of opinion that my journey through the desert to El Paso would be very dull. He did his best to persuade me to accompany him to Salt Lake City and across the Rockies to Denver, on which route, by the way, he got snowed up for the best part of two days. But I confess that I did not find my road particularly dull. I had seen enough of snow, and foresaw that I should see plenty more of it before I got home. I wished to keep in the south as long as possible.

It was a desert, without a doubt. For more than a day and a night we steamed steadily over a sandy waste, covered with patches of low scrub, sage and cactus. In the old days, they tell me, half the train was composed of water tanks for the replenishing of the engine's boilers. The Southern Pacific lay stress on the fact that they keep the road well oiled, but even so the sand and dust made the observation car uninhabitable for a good part of the time. On the other hand, perhaps owing to the dust, the sunsets were splendid. And when night fell, and the stars began to make their appearance in the sky, deep blue against the yellow of the sandy soil, the sight was magnificent. "As big as saucers," said

a young friend of mine who boarded the train at El Paso.

If it had not been for this young man I admit that those few days in the train might have been considerably less interesting than they were. He was perhaps twenty-nine years of age, with flaxen hair, blue eyes, a long chin and a prodigiously powerful under jaw. This development of the lower jaw is a common characteristic of the young American, possibly due to the persistent chewing of gum in early youth. But my young friend was going home to spend Christmas with his parents, who lived somewhere north of Chicago. He had been running a ranche in Mexico for nine solitary years, and suddenly the desire had come upon him to pay his neglected family a surprise visit. They had not the least suspicion that he was on his way home.

"Well! they'll be tickled to death to see you," opined an elderly man in the corner of the smoking car, who had been listening to us. "Just tickled to death, sure." He seemed so pleased with his phrase that he kept on prophesying this very uncomfortable end for the old people at intervals most of the way to Chicago.

The rancher and I became great friends before

we reached Kansas City, and I pumped him assiduously with regard to Mexico and its customs. Some day I am to look in and visit him somewhere in the heart of that disturbed land, but I regret that I omitted to make a note of his name or address, and with the vague information at my command it is very doubtful if I could discover him. I remember that his home was in a somewhat lonely spot. The nearest white man was three and a half days' journey from his door : the nearest railroad six days. It would be a charity to pay him a visit—if I could only find the place.

He explained at length the Mexicans' lack of morals, and produced in support of his contention a bundle of their illustrated comic papers which he was taking home to display to his family. I do not know what his family will think of them, for the pictures alone were quite sufficient to prove his point. When he translated the legends for us, the smoking-room crowd, hardened as they were, blushed all down their backs. He was an ingenuous young man. Then he displayed some photographs of the district where the insurrection was going on. One I recollect of a group of *rurales* (country police)

posing behind their bag for the day—a dozen or so unfortunate revolutionaries laid out on the ground in front of them. It was curiously like a snap shot of a shooting-party in England: the game laid out in rows by some proud under-keeper, the faces of the slayers wearing just the same expression of conscious self-satisfaction. These *rurales*, he explained, were the men who were doing all the work in attempting to suppress the revolution. They were, as he said, the best men Diaz had, recruited as they were from the scum of the earth. But Diaz had gone even then: Madero was soon to follow, and it looks now, with the present host of claimants to the Presidential Chair, as if Mexico would be no place for the peaceful tourist for some years to come.

He described Diaz to me. I gathered that the late President was not, strictly speaking, a handsome man. His face was that of an elderly Indian. But he had an eye. My friend admitted that he had never seen such an eye in his life.

"And how do you like your job?" I asked finally.

By the way he answered it was easy to see that he was in love with it all—the free, open

life, the warmth, the fruits and flowers. The nearer we got to Chicago the more fondly he thought of his distant ranche. For it began to get distinctly cold. He came into breakfast the last morning shivering and white. These long train journeys did not suit him, he confessed : he missed his accustomed daily exercise. Down there, in sunny Mexico, he is up at the crack of dawn (as he phrased it) and in the saddle until sundown. A flannel shirt, riding-breeches, hat, boots and a gun—these comprise his simple outfit. For food, *frijoles* and *tortillas ;* for service, an old Mexican lady and her two nieces. A hundred and twenty Mexicans do the work of the estate, under his supervision. He looked a decidedly capable young man. We breed some of his type ourselves : you may find them scattered over the habitable globe—in Rhodesia, the back-blocks of Australia, the Indian frontier, and elsewhere. And when they land at Southampton on a chilly February morning they look, I dare say, very much as he did as we steamed into Chicago through a murky veil of snow and sleet, past a dingy wilderness of slate roofs that reminded me of the East End of London as seen from a Great Eastern train.

"G——! what a place!" he said, shivering as he looked out of the window. "They don't live here: they exist. I wonder when the next train pulls out for El Paso."

We had to remind him of his parents, waiting to be tickled to death at his unexpected appearance, and of the possible delights hidden behind the gloomy exterior of the great city. I scored a point by mentioning the theatre. His eyes brightened for a moment. He had not seen a play for more than ten years.

The last I saw of him was on the platform of the station, his coat collar turned up to his ears, wondering how soon he could decently get away from the metropolis of the Middle West.

Chicago did not appeal very much to me either just then. I have no doubt it is a magnificent city, seen under favourable auspices. Its apologists say that we are not to regard it as given over to the manufacture of machinery, the slaying of hogs. It has made strenuous efforts to beautify itself: it has laid out parks and boulevards that compare favourably with those of any other American city: it prides itself, not without cause, on its many private collections of art treasures and rare books. But the casual traveller depends more

for his comfort upon such trifles as the weather and the quality of his hotel. I had exchanged the sunny skies of Southern California for snow and gloom and biting winds. And the hotel at which I was staying (recommended by the Major) contained the most uninteresting crowd of men that it had ever been my fortune to encounter.

I remember that amiable officer reading out to me a passage from his guide-book about the house in question, describing it as "a great resort of politicians." The politician in America is not too well spoken of, and I had heard many hard things about him, but I own I was surprised to note the dingy quality of his clothes and the lack of polish in his manners. The big entrance hall was crowded from morning to night with these dead-beats, hungrily waiting for a chance of slipping into one of the few chairs: the two writing-rooms on the ground floor rarely had a seat unoccupied. A tired politician was usually asleep in one when I wanted to write, or else scribbling what looked suspiciously like a report of his day's sales and repeating the words audibly as he put them down. This habit, curiously common in Chicago, makes composition rather a difficult matter for a

near neighbour of the speaker. But with politicians it is, I suppose, almost inevitable.

They need not, however, expectorate on the floor during dinner.

I must have become rather irritable at Chicago. Perhaps I had been travelling too long. Anyway, I remember writing home in a spiteful mood to the effect that the trouble with Chicago was that they did not kill enough hogs there; and that my hotel could quite easily supply the packers with a hundred or so more. I thought of my young friend from Mexico, and wondered how he was faring. His appreciation of the city as we entered it seemed to me then to have been a sound one.

Being for the moment in a captious mood, I may remark that no town in the wide world conceals the names of its streets with such success as this. The anguished stranger looks in vain in Chicago for some hint as to his whereabouts. Reaching the corner of a block, he stares up at the corners of the houses—no sign: on the telegraph posts—no sign: down on the pavement at his feet (where they frequently put the name in some Western cities)—not a hint. The only possibility of finding my way that I

was able to discover after three days' wandering and persistent enquiry was to pursue the line of the elevated railway. Here, on the standards, you may occasionally find in faded white lettering, vertically printed, a name. It might be the name of anything—the town where the standard was made, or the address of the nearest restaurant—but I found eventually that it was really intended to indicate the street. Even the police admitted that the authorities were somewhat lax in carrying out this part of their duties. I think I heard that the municipal council were considering the installation of some uniform pattern of notice-board.

I am conscious of not having made the most of my opportunities in Chicago. The properly constituted traveller will never leave before visiting the Union Stockyards, which cover an area of an incredible number of acres and can accommodate an even more incredible number of hogs and cattle. I like the word "accommodate" in this connection. And perhaps I should have seen the University, to which the great Mr. Rockefeller has contributed so handsomely, and the Lake Shore Drive, and the numerous wide and spacious "bullivars," as my friend at Quebec

used fondly to term them. They told me when I got back to New York that I had misjudged the city, which was really one of the most interesting places on the continent. I believe they were right, and if I have said anything harsh about it I beg you will make due allowance for the weather. Next time I go there I shall not choose December for my visit. And I do not think I shall select a hotel which the guide-book describes as "a favourite resort of politicians."

XX

VALEDICTORY REMARKS

THE process of saying good-bye has always been singularly distasteful to me. I dislike it even in the case of imaginary characters, and when I have finished writing a novel I am unhappy for several days at the thought of losing the little circle of companions that have been growing more and more intimate with me for perhaps half a year. Yet a time comes when we have to separate: when I have to turn my friends out into a cold and unsympathetic world and begin painfully to scrape acquaintance with a new set. And now, in America, I feel that I have left just such a circle, scattered over the continent from Quebec to Vancouver, from Los Angeles back to New York, perhaps a little more real to me than if they had been merely creatures of my imagination. Are they more real? It would be difficult to say. I spoke to them, it is true: I grasped them by the hand; but in some cases they begin already to grow shadowy and indistinct,

creatures of a dream. I am home again, and it seems a long time since I left Chicago for Washington, or Washington for New York, or even since I went on board the liner at her pier and plunged for a week or more into a new set of acquaintances altogether.

All self-respecting travellers are expected to wind up their desultory impressions with a reasoned summary, a balance-sheet, as it were, a grave statement of the conclusions to which they have come after long and anxious consideration. Frankly, I do not feel myself equal to the task, and I do not propose to attempt it. I set out to give, as faithfully as possible, a transcript of my personal sensations as a stranger—one who had never crossed the Atlantic before and could approach the great world of Northern America with a fresh and unbiased mind. I embarked upon the voyage with curiosity and a lively interest, which survived without any appreciable diminution three months of fairly constant travel. I may say that I enjoyed myself thoroughly from start to finish; that I received many kindnesses and, I hope, made many friends. But, after three months, I do not consider myself qualified to instruct Canada or the United States

on any important domestic or political problems. I have been sincere, but desultory: I intend to remain desultory and sincere to the end.

I had meant to spend some time in Washington, and a few days in Baltimore and Philadelphia. As a fact, I remained in Washington for a single night, and passed through the other two cities without leaving the train. They were knee-deep in snow, and locomotion was extremely difficult. All that I remember of the capital is a fine railway station, some well-designed streets and public buildings all alike covered with snow, and a photographer's shop, where the ambitious visitor could be immortalised while he waited, blushing under Mr. Taft's expansive smile. There are some in England still who believe that the camera cannot lie, and I thought for one moment that it might almost be worth while to take home with me documentary evidence of so warm a welcome by the President. It would have looked well reproduced in the illustrated press.

New York was also deep in snow when I arrived. But I was glad to get there: it was another step on the way home, and somehow I had begun to feel a little tired of continual travel. Besides, I wanted to see the Professor again, and

talk over with him all I had seen. To get back to the club again, and find the Professor sitting in his accustomed chair in the smoking-room, was almost as good as getting to London itself. He was there the evening I arrived, and we embarked at once upon a discussion that lasted until the small hours of the morning. Some thoughtful friend had sent him the article in which I had given my recollections of his lecture on the American woman, and he wished to correct my impressions on the subject. He discoursed at length upon women's clubs, and the mutual improvement societies out of which they sprung; their organisation, the sending of delegates to Washington, and the election of a woman president; and finally he spoke bitterly of the men they employ to assist them in their societies. But the American woman is, I admit, too large a subject for me to tackle, even with the Professor's assistance. I did not meet her, alas! in sufficient numbers or with sufficient intimacy. But it was clear that my friend would not approve of the methods employed by those English ladies who attempt to intimidate ministers of the Crown by threats of physical violence.

We diverged from the ladies' clubs to the Greek

letter clubs at the Universities, on which I was anxious to obtain some information. The Professor classed them as undemocratic, fostering class distinctions, tending to become secret societies, with almost Masonic ritual. I learned that they were carried on into later life, and that old men might be seen wearing the badges of their club. "In effect, rubbish," said the Professor, who was in an iconoclastic mood. But then the Universities themselves were commonly run on altogether wrong lines. In England the heads of the colleges and the tutorial staff generally might tend to become fossilised, but at all events they had the management of their own affairs: the University was administered by them, according to their lights, in the interests of science and sound scholarship. In America, I gathered, the faculty existed merely as a teaching staff, and the governing body was in general a committee of business men, probably presided over by some wealthy man, posing as a benefactor to the institution. No millionaire, he said with sardonic humour, considered his establishment complete until he possessed a university of his own.

I asked him if he thought this lack of control on the part of the faculty had any effect on the

manners of the undergraduate. Were the professors respected by the great body of their pupils?

"Not only in their eyes," he said, "but in the eyes of the majority of the public, the captain of the football team is a personage of infinitely greater importance than any member of the faculty."

I intimated that possibly the same might be said of Oxford or Cambridge. Certainly at the time of the boat race the stroke of either crew occupies more public attention than the vice-chancellor of either university. But for all that the head of a college in England is an awe-inspiring figure. Consider the Dean of Christchurch, the Master of Trinity: observe the dignified condescension with which they receive on occasion a royal guest. They are monarchs in their little principalities, but even a humble college fellowship is a post of comfort and dignity. Some twenty or thirty years ago the fellow of a college was not even expected to work for his living: he was considered to have earned the right to free quarters and a comfortable bachelor's income for the rest of his life. He could not marry, it is true; but this restric-

tion did not commonly trouble him to any grave extent. He dabbled, if he chose, in delicate points of scholarship, and employed the rest of his considerable leisure in argument with his friends in the common-room. His was the ideal life for a dilettante scholar. And even now, though they have restricted his tenure of the office to a term of years, and he is expected and encouraged to take some part in tuition work, there remains a cloistered calm about his existence that appeals very strongly to some minds. I think there was a time when I would gladly have settled down into that groove.

"You have an atmosphere," said the Professor, summing up the matter with a touch of sententiousness, "which our universities do not possess."

"It tended to become drowsy," I explained. "The common-room of a college is rather like a museum of fossils, even at the present time."

"They are no more fossilised at Oxford than they are at Harvard. All educational establishments tend to become fossilised. They are creatures of routine, and when you have gone on doing any one thing in the same way for many years, you destroy its life."

We threshed out the whole question of educa-

tion that night. I think in the end we came to the conclusion that the teaching staff should mix more with the world, and that a steady stream of new blood was required, but that at the same time the profession of a teacher demanded considerable experience. There should be a certain number of young men prepared to take up the business for a few years and then pass on to something else, and a few, with exceptional qualifications, who should remain in order to instruct the new generation how best to carry on the good work.

"In effect," I said, when at last we reluctantly left the club for the cold night without, "a Professor aged more than thirty years ought to be a very remarkable man."

It all seems a long while ago. I am at home now once more, after rolling across the Atlantic for something more than a week at a very unsteady gait, and marvelling once again at the very little that is to be seen on that immense expanse of ocean. And I have come to the conclusion that it is a dangerous thing to begin travelling at my age. This expedition will, unless I am mistaken, beget a lust for wander-

ing. I felt it strongly when I stood at Lobos Point, by the Golden Gate, and looked out on the Pacific smiling in the sunlight. Like most of my compatriots, I have been hitherto not ready enough to take advantage of modern facilities. We are a conservative race; not until a new invention has been thrust in our faces for half a century do we begin to awake to its advantages. Every man, I say now, ought to see something of the world in which he lives; and transport is so easy that there is no excuse for his neglect to do so. I foresee now that I shall have to complete the circle—to go round by South Africa, India, Japan, Australia. I feel that I have left an interesting task only half done.

And as to crossing the Atlantic, it is nothing. With some it becomes a habit. The Major, for example, who left New York a week before me, is going back again, he tells me, in another fortnight or so. He grumbles at the necessity, but I confess I had a moment of envy when I heard that he was returning to the Golden West. England in January is not so desirable a residence that he need be desolated at the thought of leaving it for the sunny splendour of Southern

California. I believe in a year or more I shall discover some business of my own that shall make another journey there inevitable.

I am conscious of an irritating inability to make these final remarks express in any way the sum of my feelings towards America and its inhabitants. I tried to put down some notes on the voyage across, but found it extraordinarily difficult to write anything whatsoever with the continual rolling, aggravated by the perpetual shiver of the screw. And now, is it really necessary to add more? When they ask me at the club (as they will surely do as soon as I go down there) what I think of the country and the people, I shall be able to reply with truth that I have many happy memories of both. I think of New York, seen in the morning of a bright autumnal day, or the view over the city at night from the heights of Brooklyn; of the St. Lawrence from the citadel at Quebec, and the Ottawa river from the back of the Parliament buildings; of the Canadian Rockies, the Selkirks, and the Black Canyon; of the wooded shores of Puget Sound, and the Shasta route to San Francisco, and the sunlit slopes of the Sierra Madre seen from Pasadena. And equally with these I recall

the many friends who were good enough to exchange with me their views upon things in general at divers times and places, at Montreal and Winnipeg and Victoria and San Francisco, in railway cars or at hotels, in clubs or restaurants. May they all have as kindly a memory of me as I still have of them.

WORKS BY E. H. LACON WATSON.

THE UNCONSCIOUS HUMORIST, and other Essays.

Crown 8vo. 4*s.* 6*d.* net.

"These papers display a high and well-maintained standard of literary capacity, together with a robust development of the critical faculty. . . . The remaining essays, while keenly introspective, are, like those more particularly referred to above, agreeably free from the cheap cynicism that characterises so many modern productions of this class."—*Daily Telegraph.*

"The graceful qualities, . . . the delicate turns of fancy and humour shine abundantly in Mr. LACON WATSON'S pages. It is the book of desultory essays given to us since the unapproachable master of this form was carried to his long rest on Vailima height. . . . He touches on many subjects deftly. A note of pathos, a sly stroke of humour, a suggestion of philosophy deep enough to tickle one into momentary activity of thought, are his devices."—Mr. PERCY ADDLESHAW, in the *Academy.*

"Sense and sensibility, something of the mocking spirit, and much pleasant banter lurk in Mr. WATSON'S volume . . . Mr. WATSON'S bright, subacid humour is seen to much advantage in his papers on Confidences, Love, the Literature of Reminiscence. . . . The literary flavour of these essays is delicate, and the appeal is to fancy rather than to sentiment."—*Speaker.*

AN ATTIC IN BOHEMIA: A DIARY WITHOUT DATES.

Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

"Mr. WATSON discourses with shrewdness and humour upon such topics as diaries, tea and muffins, golf and matrimony. . . . There are few writers who can treat so deftly and so entertainingly the most commonplace feelings and incidents of everyday life."—*Scotsman.*

"If the subject-matter is the obvious, the style is singularly fresh and graceful; it is always easy, without losing a pleasant literary flavour and without degenerating into slipshod slanginess. His humour is spontaneous (or seems to be so, because he has the art of concealing his art), and a trifle subacid at times, whereby it loses nothing in piquancy. Of the seventeen essays which make up this little volume there is not one which does not contain some happy fancie, some quaint conceit, or some shrewd reflection."—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

"If there are still any who, in the present epidemic of fiction, have any time to devote to that most delightful form of literature—the essay, let them order Mr. WATSON'S volume from their bookseller; for Mr. WATSON has the rare talent of writing charmingly about nothing at all, and his essays are a delicate exposition of the triumph of spirit over matter—which is, after all, the crowning achievement of literature. . . . Books like this make one realize regretfully how much most of us miss in our daily life for lack of the observant eye. . . . We hope Mr. Watson will give us some more of these charming *causeries* before long."—*Manchester Guardian.*

LONDON: ELKIN MATHEWS, CORK STREET, W.

WM. BRENDON AND SON, LTD., PRINTERS, PLYMOUTH

Watson, Edmund Henry Lacon
A conversational tour in America