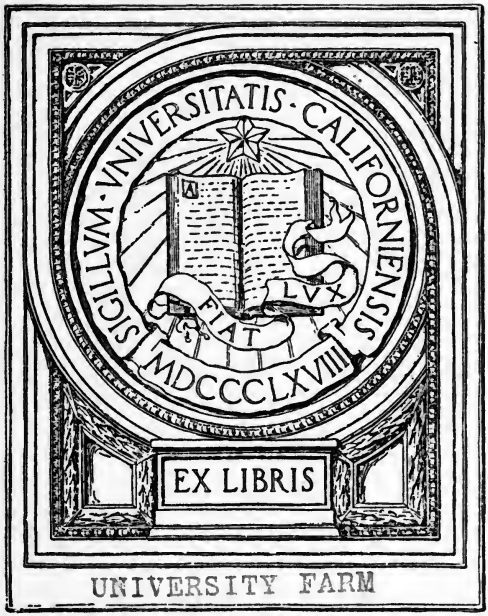
NEW WALKS IN OLD WAYS

ALVIN HOWARD SANDERS



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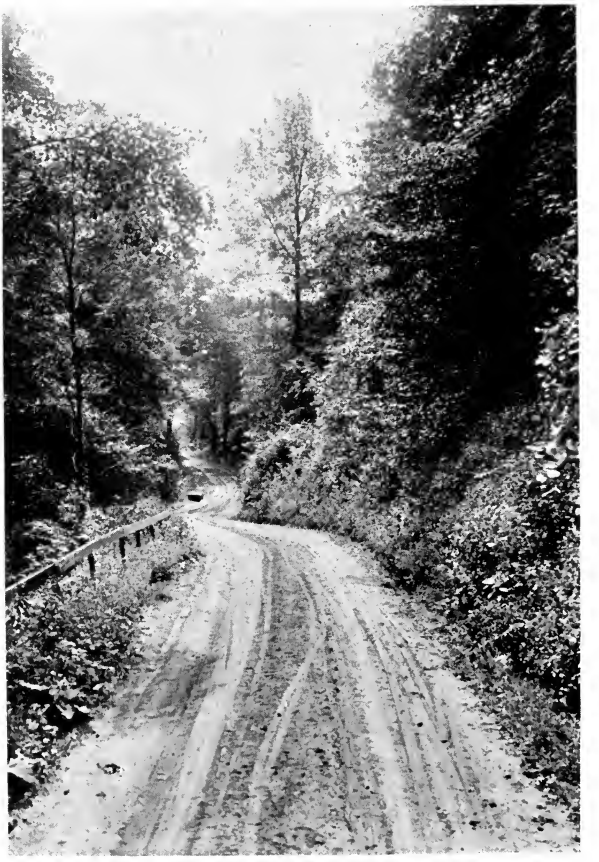

"But each narrow path and each leafy lane
That winds through a woodland or borders a plain
As it beckons you far from the broad Highway,
If you'll just let it lead you wherever it may,
Will take you to By-Way Land."

New Walks in Old Ways

In Which Relationship with Certain Humble Folk of the Roadside and the Fields is Re-established

By

Alvin Howard Sanders

Editor "The Breeder's Gazette,"
Author of "The Road to Dumbiedykes," "The Black Swans," "In Winter Quarters," etc.

. . . "*No stream from its source*
Flows seaward, how lonely soever its course,
But what some land is gladdened."
—Owen Meredith

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"Ah, Love! *Could Thou and I with Fate conspire*
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would we not shatter it to bits — and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire."
— Omar Khayyam

"FORE!"

THE writer has no apologies to make for the thinly-veiled criticism of the exactions of modern life that runs like a thread through the so-called "Idle Hour" series, of which this is the fourth. He would not go Thoreau's length, but does intend these little volumes to stand as a fairly good-natured protest against a mode of living that compels mankind to devote an altogether unreasonable proportion of his days to the endless task of providing the things demanded by twentieth century civilization; leaving insufficient opportunity for the rational enjoyment of life.

If, at times, he verges on the cynical to an extent that jars the susceptibilities of those who accept as sound the prescribed routines and conventionalities, he can only reply that nothing short of a jolt now and then makes any impression.

If anything he has written shall serve to make men think just a little more of the General Plan, and a little less about their own personal advancement, the time stolen from his own business, to his own financial detriment, and devoted in many instances to so-called trifling things, will possibly not have been entirely lost.

THE AUTHOR.

Chicago, September, 1921.

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New Walks in Old Ways

I

By-Way Land

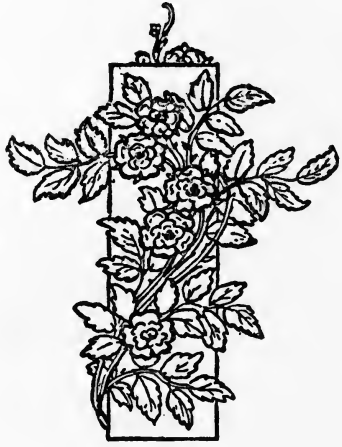
A WONDERFUL land is By-Way Land
If only you understand!
But first you must leave the main-traveled road
That links city and town to town.
You must throw 'way your pack and lighten the load
And dump a big lot of your troubles down
When you start for By-Way Land.

It's not on the map, this By-way Land;
No sign-boards guide you there;

But each narrow path and each leafy lane
That winds through a woodland or borders a plain
As it beckons you far from the broad Highway,
If you'll just let it lead you wherever it may,
Will take you to By-Way Land.

It's not a long journey to By-Way Land
If only you seek it right.
Steal away from the crowd and the roar and the rush
Of the motors and trolleys, the jams and the crush,
From the traffic that thunders incessantly by,
And look for blue sky—or the flight of a crow!
It won't matter much just which way you go.

Any bird, any bee, any creature that knows
Where cattle are grazing and meadows are sweet,
Where orchards and hedge-rows and wild roses meet,
Will show you the Highway to By-Way Land.



II

The Seen and the Unseen

WE were late coming out this year. Not that the little place itself had lost any of its old-time charm, but the spring of 1921 was a period when most of us were busy dissipating profits we thought we had made during the late great war of wars. We all forgot, apparently, that the war had to be paid for, and that the price was big. It was a time when men had to put every ounce of themselves possible into the oars by which the old boat of business is supposed to be propelled. The worst of it was, no matter how much effort was expended, so strong ran the adverse tides that not only was forward progress quite impossible, but it was only with difficulty one

could escape the drift upon dangerous rocks. Finally, however, about mid-June a stronger arm came to my relief, and I was put ashore at a port remote from the road-steads of commerce and industry.

I knew I was going to give up my seat for a time at least, for two old friends of mine had lately called to me in tones not to be successfully resisted. One was a whip-poor-will; the other a yellow-billed cuckoo. How these shy creatures of wildwood thickets ever found their way across the miles of brick and stone and concrete that separated me at the time from the big world of the out-of-doors, I shall never know. They did not come nor go together. One broke the stillness of the night with startling suddenness, repeating his old familiar cry insistently for perhaps a hundred times, and then was gone. He was so far from his own accustomed haunts, that I took the call as personal to myself.

There are few more elusive feathered friends than the cuckoo with the yellow bill. You may often hear him in the trees, but will require a quick and well-trained eye actually to discover him. He is known by his note only to most people, and they usually refer to him as "the rain crow." Of course, he is not a crow at all, any more than the "snowy cricket" of the August night is a "tree toad." This yellow-billed cuckoo voiced his message very early one morning, just before the sun had shown his ruddy rim above the still gray waters of the lake; and later on was heard again, and, as he wove a spell of memories of olden days, I fancied I could see and hear "Black Swans" and nodding plumes and leafy whisperings at the end of a road that leads from winter quarters out to an enchanted castle in the woods where a Fairy Princess sleeps and waits.

It is not a lofty pile of stone with draw-bridge, moat and rugged battle-

ments. Iron gates, not difficult to manage, are all that bar your entrance. The only sentinels that guard the Sleeping Beauty are the oaks and lilacs, and, once we find ourselves inside, the Sweet Spirit of the Place awakes, and straightway a burden falls. You will not hear it drop, for grass is velvet.

The evening paper comes, but suddenly I have lost my interest in the market page. I should much rather study the coloring of that royal purple Clematis. The mail arrives, consisting mainly of brokers' advertisements of new bond issues by corporations in distress, and unpaid bills; but can't you see the beauty of the lightning playing yonder in that "thunder head?" Now the blessed rain is streaming from the cloud as it approaches fast flying from the west! I know of a promissory note, too, that has to be taken care of somehow during the next three weeks, but, dearly beloved, just scent the infinitely

delicate fragrance that the dashing shower has started from the Sweetbriar rose I planted now near twenty years ago! There was a real promise to pay on the part of that tiny rootlet when I set it there one May-time of the days, "lang syne," and here am I collecting all the interest many times compounded! Here am I so overjoyed at freedom once again regained that I am straightway asking you to sit with me beneath the greenwood tree; just child enough in spirit to want to tell you all about it; just guileless enough to imagine that everybody else is as interested in all I see about me as I am myself! Well, you are not compelled to follow just because I am obliged to write.

I have said that we were behind our usual schedule coming out, but the moment I saw a hollyhock in bloom and heard a cricket underneath the window, I knew at once that Nature was as much ahead of her accustomed

dates as we were behind our own. There are some things, though, out here that travel with unerring certainty, regardless of the early or the later rains, and so independent of all solar vagaries that you may know through all the centuries just where to find them on a certain hour of any given date. The fixed star changeth not, and I did not need to go out to the front gate beyond the trees, and look toward the zenith the first night of our arrival, to know that the most beautiful sight in all the northern summer sky was exactly where it should be. You may talk Altair, Antares, Spica and Arcturus all you like—I stand by Vega. There are a few people in this world, too, whom I am just as sure about as I am of that steel-blue sparkling diamond in the stellar brooch called Lyra; but only a few—only a very few. Thrice blessed are those who have even one they may depend upon with perfect confidence.

Strange, isn't it, what a hold a little old place like this can lay upon your affections? No, not necessarily upon yours, but mine. A lot of our acquaintances wonder, I suppose, what in the world I can see in it. Well, it is often the unseen rather than the scene itself that binds, and to the casual visitor the real treasured growths entwined about these walls and doorways are quite invisible. That Ampelopsis clinging so tightly with its tiny little tendrils apparently feels as I do about it. It never had to be forced or assisted or its attachment stimulated or maintained by any outside help. From the first day I had my foot upon this particular bit of soil I began to take root and try to make the place my own, just as that ivy has spread its green drapery thickly and closely all about the spaces it has completely and persistently invested. The woodbine that serves now so gracefully as an outer curtain on the latticed win-

dows of the porch had, on the contrary, to be helped before it became a party to the scheme. We had to support its efforts at first with wire or twine. It seems happy enough now, after some eighteen years, but it would really not take much of an effort on your part or mine to coax it away. You see, these vines are like ourselves. They differ in their ideas of growth and development and devotion, just as we do, and you will find that the Virginia creepers of this world largely outnumber the cultivated Ampelopsis of your catalogues, with which this reference was begun. Of course, the cinquefoliated plant is vastly hardier. It laughs at zero, and defies all drouths. Adverse conditions in time will surely kill the other. Still the ivy more than compensates in beauty, refinement and in fast adherence to anything to which it gives itself, for its unfortunate lack, in this iron climate, of mere physical strength. Tear away from its em-

brace that to which it so steadfastly clings, and it falls and dies. The creeper, on the contrary, deprived of the support with which it is familiar, will wander freely round about, and take up readily again with anything that comes its way. It is a good "mixer," has overflowing vitality, makes friends with everybody, and therefore enjoys universal popularity. The ivy seeks and finds some one thing it loves, and you must not tear it loose, for, if you do, it will not rise again.

The woodbine probably cannot quite understand what makes the ivy pursue a course that will not stand rough handling, and doubtless scorns its single-heartedness of purpose; but that attitude can by no possibility change the other creature's nature. It was born a totally different type, and in the end will inevitably be crowded out and overcome by coarser growths. We are taught, however, that in Nature it is

always the fittest that survives; so, admire the ivy as we may, its sturdier companion is apparently the one the Lord meant should inherit the earth and the fullness thereof. Just the same, I propose to cultivate and protect my Ampelopsis to the last, for I like it best. Anyone can have common creepers with them for the asking. You have to care for the other, and somehow there is a double joy and happiness in protecting and saving that which one loves, and which if neglected you know will wither and decay. I can destroy that beautiful growth on our north wall with a pocket knife in one minute, although it has taken years to produce it. You can't kill the Virginia creeper with an axe. The one, therefore, is the object of my particular solicitude. The woods are full of the other.

It is that which I cannot now see around the fireside where the black, swan-like andirons stand that makes

that lounge and easy chair so precious. It is not what that cherry tree is today that appeals to me so much as the thought of what a little thing it was in the spring of 1902. It is not the automobile there in the garage that I think about so much when the sun goes down these days as of little "Pride"—a Shetland Pony—that once munched his hay and oats in a stall that has long since disappeared. The whole place is haunted. There are spirits in every nook and corner of the cottage, and good fairies live in every hedge and oak and clump of shrubbery. You cannot see them, to be sure, but that is no proof that they are not there. For me, at least, they have and shall have to the end of time a real existence. They are all around me now, but if I undertook to point them out, or even name them, probably they would fade away as quickly as the "insubstantial fabric" of any other dream. But I am sure they would come back to bless

and comfort, at my beck and call, in hours of need.

The walls of Dumbiedykes—as the name itself would indicate—are supposedly silent, but I assure you they are not. On the contrary, they speak frequently to those who can claim a real acquaintance with them. The peculiar thing about it is that they either cannot or will not commune with strangers. There are a few besides ourselves who, whenever they rest beneath its roof, hear these mystic voices; but you must have endeared yourself in some real heart-gripping way before the walls give up their stories of the years.

As in the case of the elves that live in the eaves outside, these wall-fays not only evade the notice of all save those who love them, but their speech is for those who hear it only. True, they lay no injunction of secrecy upon those to whom they talk. They do not need to do so, for there is that in their

narrations which quite defies translation into common speech. You could not tell anyone else all they say to you if you tried each one of all the languages heard at the abandoned construction of the tower of Babel. Their presence may be revealed to you by the merest whisperings, but if your heart be properly attuned its strings will vibrate instantly in sure response. We have always these dear house-guests with us, and of course they help to drive away the wicked little bogie-men in blue who sometimes gain admission even into the happiest of lives.

There is another mystery about it all: these spirits speak only of the absent. Let any one of those they know and recognize appear in person, and they fly away. It is only after a familiar face is gone that these friendly little folk come out and chat. They may perch upon the mantel over the fireplace. They may be seen sometimes around the book-shelves or the

cushions of the swinging-seat out on the porch. I have known them to gather upon the moulding of a magic oval mirror that hangs in the hallway at the foot of the stairs; and here, with just a little bit of help, they will draw for you real portraits of loved ones far away.

I might sell you the place. You have not wealth enough to buy my phantoms; and, if you had, I could not deed them to you. They are ours alone, and as truly non-transferable as they are intangible. You have only my word for the truth of what I write, but in every land, in every clime, wherever human minds and human hearts hold fast to all that is near and dear, I will find you witnesses to prove that such things be.

Just a little retreat in By-Way Land
In the edge of a burr-oak wood.
It is not very wide, it is not very high;
You may not even see it in passing by,
But it's there in the arms of the sheltering trees,

Where it's found by the sunbeams and sought
by the breeze
That is born on the prairie somewhere in the
west;
And in the seclusion of that cosy nest,
With its pictures of peace and its bidding to
rest,
You may always forget the great Highway's
demand,
For it's stowed away snugly in By-Way Land.

III

A Time for Everything

RECREATION is a word that must be hyphenated to be rightly interpreted. Re-creation! That is the underlying thought. No time for it? Well, just take time or make time for it somehow. You do not have to circumnavigate the earth looking for it. There is not a farmer or a factory hand but can find ways and means of getting his mind off his troubles, temporarily at least, within a mile of his own particular treadmill, if he only will; and he owes it to himself and to those who have to live with him to do it occasionally at least. Work is, of course, the law of our being, but there is no animal, no plant, no phenomenon in Nature but has some-

thing to say to us on that subject that is well worth knowing. Men and women will go all day, and for more than half the night, but I have noticed that nerve specialists are not overworked among the mudhens and muskrats of the marsh. The Apostle Paul was fond of asserting that "there is a time for all things." There is a time to laugh and a time to weep; a time to dance and a time to sleep; a time to sow and a time to reap; a time to give and a time to keep; and this truth one can easily see exemplified by observing the wise balance between work and play, between activities and repose, maintained by all animals and plants—save man. If you don't believe it, look around you. I don't care whether you follow a butterfly or a bull of Bashan; whether you study the life of a hog or a hyacinth. They will all tell you the same thing, and you will probably go right on ignoring all they say—and pay the

price. That's what most of us are doing.

Last week we had been invited to attend a big reception in the city. Some of our human neighbors drove in. They had been busy all day; quite as busy, I should say, as the birds and bees and big and little bugs that live alongside, but that was not enough. All our other friends, save a screech owl that lives across the way, had gone early to bed, as usual. The sky was overcast. The moon had passed the full. The cloud-screen hanging between the silent fields and woods and Vega, with her million gleaming followers, obscured even the bright overhead lights of our rural Broadway.

I had seen not long since the real Gotham artery; not so busy as in the old effervescing midnight hours, but still an apparently happy hunting-ground for predatory bipeds, with a taste for poultry. Of course, like all

other provincials from Chicago, Oshkosh and Kokomo, we had first taken in the conventional "show," where some supposed "comedian" sings and dances through three acts, while girls pose and parade as frequently as the time required for a change of abbreviated costume will permit. Now, let no one imagine that just because one may see the beauty of a wheatfield or a hedgerow that he need necessarily be oblivious of it in other fields. My only quarrel is with those who only care for it in certain particular forms. The fact is that the more ready one's response to all beauty in the natural world the more certain is one's appreciation of it in the lilies and roses that now and then burst into flower in the garden of humanity. That is not to admit, however, that I saw anything in Forty-second Street that New York night that compared very favorably with our larkspurs, catbirds and rugosas. At least the

latter are not "made up" to withstand the glare of the solar spotlight. I am willing to concede that a woman glowing in blended pink and white and crimson of her own—and especially if Nature has endowed her mentally as well—is truly as great a glory in the human gallery as any perfect Premier or Columbia in the florist's window.

Something near 1,000 miles of distance separates the Biltmore, and all it stands for, from the bird-bath in the mint-bed underneath the big white oak in the corner of the lawn at Dumbiedykes. I confess that I can enjoy the animated life of the one as well as the sylvan charms of the other, when in the mood for it. There are times when the saxophone, the banjo and the drum in syncopated harmony strike a responsive chord, just as there are other hours when nothing but contact with open spaces and blue sky will satisfy. Both serve us, and

were meant to serve us; and happy are those who have not allowed a love for either one to rob them of the power to find something good in the other. I find fault with those only who can go crazy about "jazz," and yet never think of stopping to listen to a blue-jay's cry or to follow the fitful twinkling of a firefly on a summer night.

It is true that there is splendor indescribable and mystery in the dawn, and poetry a-plenty in the sunset. There is a real joy in the teeming life of forest, field and stream all through the long, bright summer days. There are strange, weird witcheries in the moonlight, and thrills in thunderstorms, but the peace that passeth all understanding you will find in the out-of-door world on a moonless night in June. If you are quite alone, there will be absolutely nothing to come between yourself and Nature at her best. If you are in the country and will go outside, and lose yourself even

for a moment in the soft outlines and deep shadows of a world at rest, my word for it your sleep will be sweeter because of the benediction you will have received. No, I will not say that. I am forgetting all the time that not all are affected profoundly by Mother Nature's moods. It is possibly a great misfortune to sense and feel them all instinctively; to be lifted sometimes to great heights, and again plunged abjectly into abysmal depths; the change as swift perhaps as the shifting of the winds, or the proverbial bolt of lightning out of an apparently cloudless sky. The aeolian harp has little power over its own weird music, and is not a popular instrument. It registers true, however.

So when I heard about the wonderful time everybody had at the big reception, when told of the beauties of the out-of-door dancing platform, with "Jap" lanterns and electric illuminations, and of the hour at which the

restless milling around came to an end, I knew that our dusky, slumbering landscape had been a wise yet wordless commentary upon the feverish fête in progress that hot night inside the city walls.

An almost forgotten poet's description of one historic scene of that sort fits them all. You will find it in "Childe Harold." Once upon a time it was part of a schoolboy's favorite declamation, so he does not have to refer to the original text in this connection. It just comes unbidden:

"There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her beauty and her chivalry;
And bright the lights shone o'er fair women and brave men.
A thousand hearts beat happily,
And when music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes that spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell."

Thus was ushered in the fateful dawn of Waterloo, and gayly the revelers rode to battle through dim forest paths.

"And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves
Dewy with Nature's tear-drops as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
O'er the unreturning brave. Alas!
E'er evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its next verdure."

The Germans fought with the English against Napoleon that day, and, a little more than a century later, the allied French and British watched helplessly the Prussians occupy the abandoned palace of the Belgian king. Such are the mockeries of human history; such the crimes committed in the name of civilization and Christianity; such is man's boasted superiority over the herds and flocks grazing ever and forever in calm content upon a thousand hills!

Those who go to bed with the sunset in the stillness of a grassy, leafy world are indeed a busy, hungry lot when the light again begins to break. In fact, one mighty swelling chorus precedes Aurora's pageant of progress round the globe. One degree of longitude after another, from east to west, awakes to claim the largesse that is strewn always—and commonly with lavish hand — from her bounteous, never-failing chariot of gold. Bleating of lambs, squealing of pigs, bawling of calves, baying of dogs, crowing of cocks, cawing of crows, the robin's rousing reveille, and pleadings of baby purple martins in the nest! All face the new day with a joy and hope not often manifest in the morning hours where men and women and alarm clocks dwell.

The advent of the sleeping porch in modern architecture is a hopeful sign. The number of "stuffy" bedrooms in this world is equaled only by the sands

of the sea. What is the big idea? Possibly race suicide. Even a wild goose knows that the more you shut the oxygen out the more trouble Nature has in getting rid of the carbon that kills.

Night-birds that wear fur or feathers instead of "swallow-tails" may be found dozing and dreaming through the daylight hours in some hollow tree or hidden darkened nest. They don't have to go downtown to the office at eight or nine or ten A. M., lest some other restless bird or beast wrests control of their bread and butter from them. All creation, civilized man alone excepted, understands that there is ample time in life for everything, if you but observe the law.

Collectively, man regards himself as supreme, and looks with more or less contempt upon the rights of everything else. Individually, it is "myself first and you afterwards." There is only one possible cure for this im-

possible attitude of mind: knowledge of our real place in the whole big scheme, yet not one in a million cares or thinks enough about that to make the least attempt to get his proper bearings. Anyone who undertakes to point it out will have few followers and many critics. The inertia of the mass is too well established. Thoreau laid bare some of the hollowness and gruelling requirements of our boasted civilization, and found a half-dozen disciples. He who challenges man's essential superiority, and rails at his boasted morality, need look for little sympathy from those about whom he plainly speaks the truth. Personally I know only a few who really care enough about the rest of the world to interest themselves in its study.

There is something worth while to be learned in every square yard of the out-of-doors, whether you are among the grain binders at their work, or watching honey bees in the golden

pollen of a pink wild rose. Did you ever notice the marvelous deep-sea blue of the spiderwort blooming alongside the roadway in the grass? For most of you it has no existence whatsoever. You might miss the "movies" if you do not hurry; so if I prefer rather to loiter by the way and wait for the sunset that is to be so rare this evening, or for great Jupiter and far-off Saturn to show their splendid lights, I shall not have much company.

We might all with profit know something more about our relatives that live in nests or burrows differing somewhat from our own. They wear different raiment, but their vital organs function in the universal way. They have habits, aspirations, and the immortality that is implied in reproduction, varying not in the least, so far as I can see, from our own. If any one man knew all that Linné knew of plants, all that Fabre knew of bugs,

he might then write something really worth printing. As it is, most of us may only make our petty, futile observations, and journey on to make room for someone else. Still, if you care to walk along with me a little way you will be welcome.

IV

Hay Days and Meadow Larks

SOMEWHERE in the distance I hear a sound that drives me to this—a mowing-machine cutting its way through tall, waving, ripening, falling grass; and I can no more resist the temptation to speak about it than a pig can help crawling through a convenient hole under a gate into a garden where all manner of green things dear to porcine palates grow. You may not be interested in mowers or in mowing. You may not hear anything resembling music in the song of the sickle bar. It may bring to your mind perhaps only thoughts of the market value of the product, or the high cost of harvesting. If so, turn away right here, and let me browse

around alone, for the click of that machine in motion bridges for me all the space that lies this side of Boyland.

Hay time! Hay days of glorious memory! How I loved the coming of the sharp knives in the meadow! And yet, at the last moment, I was always worried as the teams were started. Not that I would stop the proceeding; for good rich grass and clovers must not be allowed to go uncut. I knew the value of well-stowed lofts when we were all in winter quarters. In fact, there was no event of the year that brought more real delight than the day when the big gray, patient Percherons, wearing white cotton fly covers, were started on the job. But there was one source of real anxiety as the crop began to come down. I knew that the broad expanse of timothy and red clover was the home of many meadow larks, and that every nest was in deadly peril. And so my joy in the hay harvest was clouded by concern.

Those who get nothing out of country life and harvest scenes, save figures on the debit or the credit side of the ledger when the accounts are balanced, are warned to read no further than this page, for I shall have nothing to say that will interest them in the least. The greater part of my life has been spent in hoeing and harvesting, sometimes real grain, and sometimes only "chaff." At any rate, stout harness has been worn; so don't begrudge me, therefore, if I cast it off an hour or two again, and ask another little "run to grass." I only call the attention of the intensely practical ones who make up the great majority in this human hive to this one fact.

If the Chicago packers, for example, only credited themselves with the meat they get out of the animals they buy, theirs would be a discouraging and a losing enterprise. But they have found out that there is much more than mere bacon and beef to be had

from that which is passing by them. In this farming business it is not merely the bushels and the pounds produced that may be entered in the credit column. Those are the big, substantial, essential things, of course, without which there is nothing; but there are blessings and genuine satisfactions that should come to every human being, I care not what the size of his bank account or his mortgage, the number of his acres, the size of his house or wage, or the nature of his work; provided that he lives upon the soil, lives where the stars can be seen at night, lives where the air is fit for human lungs, lives where he is in hourly partnership with the great one God called Nature, and has any appreciation of his true relations to the universe. As a matter of fact, the hired man has the same interest in the sunrise and the milky-way of the summer sky as the owner of a great estate. The hardest-working tenant

has just as much stake in the rustling of the night wind in the tree tops, in the trickle of the raindrops from the roof, as the president of the Steel Corporation.

True, you can neither sell, eat nor wear sun rays, stars, west winds nor showers, but you can feed your soul, if you have any, once in a while, as well as your stomach. You can satisfy your mind, if it is properly organized, as well as your body. You can clothe your thoughts in beauty now and then —if you only try—as well as your back with fine apparel. If you have not the will nor the power to get all you fairly can out of your environment, you are to be pitied; that's all.

Almost anyone can find a few spare hours for books, and he who cares can get enough out of the most elementary works on botany, zoölogy, astronomy, geology, entomology or ornithology to enable him to extract enjoyment out of any plant that grows, any beast

that walks, any planet that shines in the heavens, any rock turned up by the plow, any bug or bird that flies. You don't have to go to college to get an inkling of the real wonders of the world. You don't have to be a mere visionary just because you find a lot of things that interest you in earth and air, the knowledge of which yields no actual cash. There are at least a few coppers of comfort you can carry around with you that no man can get away from you, even in these trying days of A. D. 1921 in which I write.

After your physical needs are provided for, why waste all your days plotting and planning and dreaming about additional acres when you know very well that you may have a whole section of rich black soil, and still be bankrupt in character, health and happiness? With which few remarks I am going back to the meadow.

By mere chance I discovered a nest alongside a young bull-thistle the day

the mowers were started, and of course you all know what the wise bird does when suddenly surprised while sitting in her solitary grassy sanctuary. Into the cover afforded by the tall growth of grass she darts suddenly; in fact, with almost incredible speed, not taking wing, but creeping, or rather running in a crouching position, and coming shortly to a sudden stop. At first, if you did not know that a love nest had been located, you would for an instant fancy you had flushed perhaps some wary little quadruped; but soon you see and note the cunning of the winged creatures of the fields. Building as they do build upon the ground, they display in self-defense of their homes a strategy worthy of Field Marshal Foch himself. Assuredly we are not so much wiser than the rest of creation as we sometimes think!

Lady Lark employs the tactics most certain to startle and distract your attention from the nest. She is care-

ful not to disappear entirely, because if she did you might give her up and easily locate her most prized possessions. She has no thought, however, of permitting you to lose sight of herself. In fact, she is clearly inviting you to follow her. You advance towards her a step, and she creeps rapidly on a few yards further. Pursue her, and presently—having drawn you by these well-planned movements quite away from those precious eggs or young, as the case may be—she springs into the air and sails away.

After cautioning the driver of the mowing machine who was now cutting near the nest, I got a good stout sharpened stake and drove it into the ground alongside the Maison du Lark, to mark the spot. No one, not even the average hired "hand," would deliberately destroy those five little red-throated, big-mouthed bug pockets; and that expression reminds you that being a bird mother is no sinecure.

You have not only to provide your own bread and butter, but work hard all day at the apparently hopeless task of filling up those downy caverns there in the grass. I walked over to call on them this morning. The mother was foraging about where the hay was now down all around the stake-protected domicile, just as old "Biddy" herself searches the ground for food. She saw me come near, but this time made no attempt at flight, and manifested not the slightest fear when I walked up to the brood, and bent over to inspect the family. She now apparently recognized in me a friend instead of a foe, and all the while her mate sat on guard on top of a martin house on a pole in the distance, repeating steadily the call known the lark-loving world over as the sweetest and most plaintive bird-note of the year; and, as I walked away, I saw the watchful matron in her endless patrolling of the ground about the nest pursuing a

scampering chipmunk into his own neighboring preserves.

Now this particular chipmunk, by the way, was just as busy in its sphere as the bird in hers, for a week later a fine litter of half-a-dozen "pups" began their own experiences. You may see them feeding around in the short grass, if you look for them—cute little rascals—and, as you approach them, first one and then another, speeds back to the entrance to the hole, in the depths of which they were born. They do not disappear unless you come too near, but sit all huddled close together, one or two of them standing erect, and all watching and wondering what is going to happen next—just a bunch of inexperienced stripes, with little black, beady eyes and tiny ears, every sense alert to possible danger. This has been a great year for these people. On a quarter-section of bluegrass given over to golf links there are a great number of bunkers, constructed

for the delectation of the players of the game, and for the real delight of the chipmunks. The grass-covered mounds of earth, and their accompanying sand-pits, could not please chipmunkies better if they had been planned by one of their own best architects. These hazards of the green are easy to bore into, on account of having been built up from the loose earth excavated from the "traps," and there is sand and all manner of roots and dainty growths and bugs for food and real companionship.

I wonder how many people have any knowledge of a chipmunk's singing voice. These mid-summer days during bright sunny hours, when few humans are prowling about, you can hear their clear, soft, high-pitched, rippling notes on every hand—if you have ears for such utterly inconsequential things. A friend asked one day what sort of bird it was that made these sounds. The fact is that if the

chipmunk's happy song really came from a bird throat the Audubon Society people would have a lot to say in praise of it. It is more bird-like in its quality than any note I know in connection with the quadruped creation. But we are forgetting our larklets.

Later on I passed that way again. The mother lark, still foraging, took wing with a fine fat morsel of some sort in her beak, but instead of flying with it to the nest—its obvious destination—she had in the meantime become suspicious and undertook to lie to me about the location of her birdlets by sailing away beyond it, and alighting in deep grass, that had not yet been cut, some distance further on. Anything to keep you away from the baby birds! I permitted her finesse to work, and did not approach the sacred spot.

A semi-tropic cloudburst the other evening did the new-mown hay no

particular good, and taxed all the resources of birdland to protect the nestlings from the deluge. It came out of the north, near the close of an oppressive day. Usually such violence approaches us from the west, traveling towards the great lake, instead of from it. It took several days to clear away the minor debris of leaves, twigs, dead branches—and a few live ones—left by the gusty northern gale that stretched the rainfall into horizontal streams. Objects a hundred yards distant could not be distinguished through the flying rivers of mist and rain. From the porch we could almost fancy we were in the heart of a heavy storm at sea. The steady deck, however, soon dispelled the notion, and presently we could see drenched treetops instead of blue walls of water riding out the squall.

The young larks were now about ready to leave the nest. Their downy covering had turned, almost miracu-

lously, into real feathers. They say that the processes of digestion and assimilation progress in bird interiors with astounding rapidity. I can vouch for the truth of that statement. So very rapid was the growth of the youngsters we had saved from the mower's passage that the second day after the big storm they were gone. I know they were neither drowned nor blown away, because I saw them the morning after looking fit and fat and fairly feathered. I had hoped to see the process of coaxing the larklets out among the haycocks, but they were too swift for me in their "get-away."

Again the sun is shining. The hay is dry and cured. The men are pitching it by hand in the good old-fashioned way; two forking it up onto the load, growing more unwieldy every moment, and two stowing it so that it will carry safely to the barn. The horses, waiting for the word to go, are happy, I should say; for the work is light com-

pared with dragging a big gang plow through stiff clay, and they are standing in the midst of plenty, with a fragrance in their nostrils that French perfume-makers have tried in vain for years to reproduce—the scent of new-mown hay.

V

Two of a Kind

PLAYING a round of golf the other day I noticed that my caddy—a boy of ten years perhaps—would every now and then reach down into his pocket, pull something out, hold it in the hollow of his hand and, while waiting for me to play my shot, study his treasure, whatever it was, with evident interest. Finally I got a glimpse of it—a young toad, very much alive. It wasn't bigger than a good-sized June bug. Asked where he got it, the boy said, "Down near the creek." Asked what he was going to do with it, he replied, "Don't know." By and by a gopher scampered across our path, and disappeared in a hole. The boy followed it, and an idea struck

him. I don't know what it was. I didn't ask him, but I think it was just such a thought as might have occurred to me under similar circumstances. He wonders if a toad and a gopher might not like to try living together; or at least enjoy having a friendly visit to talk over matters of mutual interest connected with their existence in the fields; and so he fishes "baby" toad out of his pocket, and, handling him with the greatest consideration, stoops down and places him carefully on the ground close to gopher's doorway, and leaves him there.

We could not very well stop to see what happened afterward. I wanted to do so, and of course the caddy would rather study that sort of situation than lug golf clubs around the links for a person with a handicap of twenty-six. I didn't dare tell the youngster that I was just as much interested in his performance as he could possibly be himself, because it won't do for players

of the game to encourage such nonsense in their caddies. The boys are supposed to keep their eyes upon the ball when you make a stroke, and not be chasing chipmunks. But golf players themselves do not always pay attention to that fundamental, so why expect too much of caddies who live in town, and don't get a chance every day to have fun with garter snakes and frogs and everything?

I was not playing much of a game that day, so far as score was concerned. I was just having a walk with the normal, healthy boy by my side; my mind and thoughts traveling much more nearly along the lines of the caddy's interest than upon beating my opponent to the putting greens. There was not much conversation between the boy and myself upon the subjects uppermost in both our minds, for the very good reason already cited; but I knew perfectly well what he was thinking about when I saw him watch-

ing that bird-dog hurrying along the hedge, with nose close to the grass. I think he saw me following the course of the dog rather than the erratic flight of our golf ball, but he wasn't supposed to address me or comment upon anything in the heavens above nor the earth below, because he was just a caddy; and of course you have no reason to expect a live, wholesome, nature-loving boy of ten to be anything else, when carrying your golf bag, but the personification of dignity and attention to the business of the hour. But somehow some form of mental telepathy seemed to be working as between the two—the old boy and the young—and the life that was in evidence all around us; and the more gophers and big brown caterpillars we saw the more shots it seemed to require to get that golf ball into the cup we were supposedly headed for. A "scrappy" sparrow, or something—perhaps the boy knew, I didn't know

—was next seen, chasing some sort of a big awkward slow-flying creature overhead.

I thought of a lot of things about this aërial combat that I was eager to speak about to somebody; but my opponent of the golf match had his eye always upon his ball, not on birds or humble bees, and it would be fatal to good discipline, from the standpoint of "Pete" (the best caddymaster I know) for me to discuss sparrow-hawk mid-air sparring matches with the boy. So I held my tongue, and immediately proceeded to "top" my midiron shot in front of the biggest bunker on the place. While digging the ball out of the pit, a broad-backed brown beetle of a sort I had never seen before came crawling down the grassy slope of the "cop" directly in front of me. Now, how can anyone, with any interest at all in this big round world and all its wonders, concentrate upon such a stupid, dead object as a golf

ball lying in a heel-hole in the sand when a strange, queer-looking creature of fat girth, and lugging a whole lot of legs and things, is waiting to become acquainted with you? I took two or three shots to get out of there, but I had found a new friend.

On the next tee I hooked my shot into a ditch near a clump of willows. The boy got there first, and located not only the ball but a flicker sitting on a lower limb wrestling with himself. Moulting of course. First the bird yanked out one of those canary-colored feathers that grow on the under-side of the wings, and then, with his sharp little toes, scratched his head as vigorously as if "Kernel Cootie" himself had hold of his red-trimmed bonnet. Incidentally, I noticed also that there was one tree in that clump that needed trimming badly. Tomorrow I would go down there, and help it out of its evident trouble. Meantime, someone playing up behind us yells "Fore!"

—the signal on the links that you are holding back other players; whereupon I "hike" the ball out onto the fairway again, and on we trudge.

The twelfth hole at Midlothian is the "water hole." All well-ordered golf links are supposed to have a pool or pond or creek or river for the players to shoot the balls across, under penalty of losing the ball (if it be a "sinker") and probably losing the hole to the opposing player. But many of us use a lightweight ball that will float in water when we come to this particular hazard. My caddies are all glad when we reach it. In the first place, all real boys find happiness in the water. Unfortunately a lot of "grown-ups" prefer something else. Boys dearly love to be on it or in it. In the second place, there is a flat-bottomed boat on this particular pond, with two short poles for propelling it about in quest of floating golf balls, when driven into, instead of over, the

artificial lake. In the third place, they all know by this time that I am just as fond of that water as they are, and can commonly count for certain, when I pull out my mashie in front of this reservoir, upon being given an opportunity to indulge their aquatic instincts. I do not often disappoint them. I may lose my golf match, but I not only please the caddies—for two or three of them always jump into the boat, unless "called down" for so doing, to render the service which one could do just as well alone—but at the same time delight my opponent, who has already played a pretty shot from the same teeing ground over the water onto the green, and has a sure "three" and a possible "two" to win the hole; whereas he knows that I cannot possibly get out of the water and land my own ball in the cup under four or five or six, according to what further difficulties may be encountered on the way. There are cat-tails, too, growing at the

edge of this water that bring visions of loons and turtles and lilies that float on the surface; of big, bass-voiced bull frogs that "boom" in mysterious hiding places; of blue herons taking wing. And another "hole" is lost.

As you play off for the sixteenth, you will note on the right, say 150 yards away, a young cottonwood growing near the edge of the "rough." That is a technical term, unfamiliar perhaps to those who have something better to do than chase a golf ball all through a golden August afternoon. It designates the uncut grass on either side of the smoothly-shaven course you are theoretically playing on. If you get out there when the red clover or timothy or bluegrass or dandelions and meadow daisies are in their glory, you may enjoy the botanical display, in the midst of which you sometimes seek your golf ball all in vain, and, if you find it, you may do a lot of mowing, in trying to get out of your trouble, with

a dull-edged iron which is not a good substitute for a scythe in actual hay-making; but you will also be bringing secret joy again to your caddy, as well as to the fellow whose main object in life just at the moment is to win that game from you. The boy is pleased because out there he is likely to flush some little creature wearing either fur or feathers, and your adversary approves of your futile "chopping" at your deeply-imbedded ball for obvious reasons of his own.

Now, I have watched this little cottonwood for many years. It stands there alone; no other tree near it. It was planted there one day, now long ago, by the wind and the rain. The breeze carried the white-winged seed across the open spaces from some big parent cottonwood far away. The rain so saturated its dainty sails, supplied by nature for just such flights, that it could wander no further. It had reached its predestined resting place;

and down among the grass-roots the "baby" tree, in due course of time, was born. For the first few years it had a hard, and apparently hopeless, struggle. The soil was neither loose nor rich in plantfood. The summers were dry, and the winters severe, but it persevered. Still it was clearly unhappy. This season, however, there has come a sudden change for the better. It is now rich in foliage, and its top is mounting upward and spreading rapidly. It is clearly now the making of a fine big specimen of its kind. With all its faults as a shade tree around a house, there is one thing about the full-grown cottonwood that almost makes up for the annual nuisance of its shedding blossoms: the splendid rustling of its delicately-balanced leaves fluttering in the wind. Ever hear it? If not, listen to it the next time you have a chance. It will repay attention, if your ears are in any degree attuned to the eternal har-

monies. Its smaller relative, the quaking aspen, has the same gift of music.

Because of the interest I have taken now for seven or eight seasons in watching the fight this waif of the fields has been making, I almost invariably "slice" my golf ball out of its proper course right up to the spot where the tree, now in the heyday of its youth, is flourishing. So you will see from all this how difficult it is to play this outdoor game when you have so many really worth-while things to distract your eye and thought; and if an adult cannot avoid all this mental philandering en route, why should we expect ten-year-old, town-bred boys to caddy for us without also lapsing now and then? However, the average person probably pays more attention to his game, and decidedly less to toads and trees than I do; which helps to explain why I never expect to become a "first-flighter" on the golf links.

As we come to the eighteenth (last) hole on the course, we are to drive over a ditch, say 140 yards distant. But why do so when, by driving into it, you get the chance of stopping to fish your ball out of the tall weeds that find such a congenial home in those soft damp depths? But—would you believe?—most of those I see playing the game never seem to think anything about the fun of scouting up and down those banks, the favorite haunt of a lot of things that live and move and crawl or swim or jump or fly for you whenever you stop to see them. In fact, the "golf fan" has only one thought in his head. If he had two or three he would not be a "scratch" player. He must be blind and deaf and dumb to all but one thing. He is just a machine for firing a ball at a mark. He is no more alive to anything else than an automatic repeating rifle would be. So what does he get out of it all, anyhow? He shoots the ball far over the

ditch, with all its native charms, hustles across the foot bridge as if there were no such things in all the world as crabs and tadpoles and funny water-bugs. He "holes out" in three, hurries to catch the train for Chicago, and fondly imagines that he has had an afternoon in the country. Well, he has, I suppose; but he has missed something which the caddy hasn't. And that night no snowy-crickets of the woods shall trill him into dreamland. He probably goes to see "The Follies."

There is plenty to do in By-Way Land;
If you're lonely it's all your own fault.
There's the dog waitin' for you a-waggin' his tail
Just dying to scout ahead down the old trail
Where the rabbits are plenty. And maybe there's quail
To be flushed 'long the fence by the field
Where the wheat's getting ready its harvest to yield!
Why, it couldn't be better, no matter who planned
The delights that await you in By-Way Land!

VI

By-Ways and Butterflies

HIGHWAYS are all right for practical transportation purposes, but, unless I have to drive to town for something or other, give me a by-way; preferably one that is via non grata to motor-mad folk, and the less it is patronized by even horse-drawn vehicles the better. In fact, it need not be, so far as I am concerned, even a decent bridle path.

I love a good horse. There are few better companions. A dog goes well with a horse. I like the combination, particularly when you just hit the trail for nowhere in particular. But horses must eat, and oats and hay often are dear. Moreover, your horse must be

used, or lose condition; so if you are keeping one just for the joy of an occasional ride, and have but a few weeks or months in the calendar year when you would greatly like to use him, you are paying rather sumptuously for the privilege. Hence it has come to pass, out here at Dumbiedykes, that I have settled down to the proposition that, all things considered, there is no journey in all this world that really has more fascination than just a leisure hour afoot, along an unfrequented country roadway. And I am perfectly content to go alone. In fact, so few people agree with me in this special particular that, as a rule, I have no choice in the matter. Occasionally I go as early as 6 o'clock A. M. on rare days in June.

I have discovered something about this hiking business: the fellow who designed the "last" for the army shoe knew what he was about. You might not like it around the Blackstone, but

going down the road, and across open country, it fits in with the scenery. One thing I have learned: you can't hike happily without a little something in your hand. When I was a young savage this was commonly a gun, with which I could shoot woodpeckers and other useful forms of animal life. Today I prefer a good stout stick; not those fashionable things they sell you, or your friends give you, with curved or bent tops. I have a collection of those; some of them gifts that carry with them memories I hope to bear with me in my latest steps. But I picked up somewhere a genuine walking stick for real road service—a stout, straight one, an inch-and-a-half thick at the top; not worked down smoothly, but left more or less in the rough, and tapering down in unaltered natural proportion. It is of solid wood, and of good weight, and it is easy to understand why it feels right in my hand as I take the road

with it, as compared with that slender, silver-mounted rosewood cane Potter Palmer gave me in Paris twenty years ago, or that nice bamboo one Senator Philander C. Knox once used. These are all well enough, worn with a silk hat, a long-tailed coat and pointed footwear upon state occasions, but they are guaranteed to spoil anybody's walk down any wagon track that winds "over the hills and far away."

I don't know which I used to envy most, gypsies or peddlers that tramped the country roads, with packs slung from a stick carried over the shoulder. I think I would have made a better peddler than a horse-trader. But, reverting to that stick, when I get it in my hand, and feel the soft earth of a quiet roadway underneath good broad shoes, I am the aboriginal man. My club is my defense and argument, if necessary. I am in that comfortable frame of mind where I don't care for men, beasts, angels or devils. I face

the world four-square, and fear no evil—and, what is more, I am not conscious of evil in my heart or mind. I touch creation at every point. There is no jar, no friction. The connection is too intimate; too closely established.

Do you hear that woodpecker calling to the faithful from his tower in yonder mosque? He has his red fez on his head. I don't know whether real, sure-enough muezzins wear them or not. Turks are supposed to; so that is near enough for purposes of comparison. But I for one had rather stand here amidst all this greenery, with the grass and wild flowers glistening in the morning dew, and hear that red-head sending out his piercing note from the top of that dead oak tree top than to be this minute on the dirty pavements in front of St. Sofia. No streets of Stamboul for mine when I can set my feet in this soft turf, and breathe such air. And as for cathedrals! Come with me.

Near that little bridge the road passes underneath a groined arch, formed by tall, leaning trees meeting overhead, that cannot be duplicated in any cathedral in Europe. Yet I will venture to say that not one in a thousand of all those who annually speed through this natural sanctuary ever observe this pointed Gothic canopy. It is not so high as St. Peter's, nor so wide as Notre Dame. There is no stained glass, for there is no need of such embellishment—just green leaves and interlacing branches through which you get glimpses of a ceiling sky-blue by day, and black, studded with twinkling lights at night.

Men try to imitate such things, using stone and paint and all the resources of their feeble art, and if they succeed to a certain degree, as at Milan or Canterbury, people flock from all over the world to see what at best can be beaten hollow in any virgin forest. The fact is that these temples exist in

every grove everywhere. Some of course are finer than others. People who live near a trail I know leading up to the higher ranges of the Big Horn mountains can walk or ride very day, if they like, through silent cathedral aisles, more solemn than those of York, almost infinite in extent, softly carpeted and flooded with a light the feeling of which no artist can reproduce.

Sermons are preached here, too; many of them better than those delivered from the pulpits of St. Paul's. Lessons are impressed quite as graphically also as in scholastic halls. The woodpecker on the dead oak tree flew just now across to the eaves of a building in the edge of a wood, and at once began to "drum." Now, you all know the sound of the automatic riveter we hear hammering wherever steel is being put in place on skyscrapers, great battleships or bridges. It was here in the woods that the inventor of that ingenious automatic tool got his original

conception. The action is identical. Men learn most of their tricks from these folk. But for the birds to copy from, there would have been no right solution of the flying-machine question. No plane has yet come from the hands of human engineers that can be for a moment compared with the purple martin's flight, in point of ease, delicacy and dependable efficiency in actual operation. Men are wise only as they succeed at last in divining a part of Nature's secrets. If a Turner is lucky enough merely to reproduce successfully a vision of "a painted ship upon a painted ocean," we talk of "genius" and "creative power."

Strolling down this same road the other morning, I reached the point where the trail bends towards a little bridge, and was involuntarily halted by something peculiarly striking in the note of a favorite bird—a brown thrasher, own cousin to the southern mocking-bird—singing his head off on

the topmost branch of a tall tree, perhaps 100 yards away. I do not know just what there was in his vocalization that particular morning differing from his customary performance. There have been more of these artists about this spring than usual, for which we are duly grateful, and their marvelous repertory had for some time past been one of the chief joys of the congregational singing heard each time the sun-glow roused this little corner of the world. But something he was saying brought me to a sudden halt. An open space separated us. From his lofty perch the thrush poured into the morning sunshine his stirring staccato potpourri. Now, as a rule, the thrush or thrasher (as many call him) is not so socially inclined towards those of us who have no feathers as his well-groomed imitator—the closest friend I have in birdland—the catbird; so when suddenly he left his high point of vantage, and flew swiftly towards the

spot where I was standing, alighting on one of the lower branches of the tree near which I stood, I was both surprised and gratified. That he had a message for me I did not doubt. Who sent him with it is a mystery; but whoever it was I thank him or her for it, and trust that I interpreted it correctly. I am equally certain that it was a hint intended for my benefit; for I had been somewhat out of spirits for several days preceding.

Unfortunately, I am no mocking-bird. Unfortunately, like some other folk, I sometimes allow the pursuit of the thousand-and-one unnecessaries demanded by modern civilized life, or permit the various petty disappointments of this human pilgrimage, to batter up my nerves. Bright sunshine, a cool day and a blazing log upon the hearth, or the grasp of a friendly hand, commonly will restore one's cheer for a time at least, but clouds come back.

My thrasher eyed me steadily for a moment at short range, for one of his breed, then dropped lightly down upon the roadside not twenty feet from the spot from which I had not moved since he stopped me by his calling. When studying birds you must keep very still. I have found that out. Any quick motion arouses instant suspicion. Evidently he had not finished feeding, or, for the sake of giving me a "pointer," he pretended he had not, for he at once began industriously seeking the seeds or insects that appeal to mocking-birds, and, strange to me at least, chirped sharply cheery notes between each "bite" as he hopped and fed along the turf; singing, in other words, as he worked. He traveled thus for perhaps fifteen or twenty feet, eying me closely all the time, and, when he seemed satisfied that I had understood, disappeared in the woods. We are all expected to whistle if we can as we go our way, no matter what our

trouble. We do not always succeed in this, however; at least I don't. When tense nerves call for relaxation you may get more help from a quiet hour along the hedge-rows, from an occasional happy bird or butterfly, than you will find in boxes of veronal or in bottles of valerian. Try roadside rambling, some of you jaded jailbirds. You might find it good medicine.

Speaking of butterflies, they seem fickle folk; possibly dis-bodied flirts, transformed coquettes; just flitting from flower to flower, helping themselves according to their liking, and passing on to the next field or garden. One of them might float around that way a second time, and remember some particular blossom that had proved specially sweet before, but I doubt it. I saw one settle down so long one afternoon upon a bright red clover bloom that she seemed disposed not to wander further, but she did; and in the natural course of events the

clover presently lost all its brilliancy, and soon turned golden brown. Butterflies of course had then no further interest in it. It requires no particular flight of the imagination, after once ascribing universality to all created life, to find in this very common incident a real romance.

A Romance of the Fields

Through a meadow that waved in the summer sun,
Where the crimson clovers bloomed.
A butterfly pink and gold and gay
Came airily winging her care-free way
In a journey just begun.

And she kissed first this
And she then kissed that,
As she paused in her happy flight,
And each bloom was thrilled
And with joy was filled
At the light caress and the fairy touch
Of a butterfly fair and bright.

And one she found in her wayward path
That proved so surpassing sweet,

That she folded her wings on its rosy breast,
As if loving it better than all the rest,
And, spreading about it her filmy lace,
She clasped it close in a fond embrace,
Draining its heart to its deepest depths
Of the nectar stored through the sunny hours
In that billowy garden of nodding flowers;
Then, butterfly-fashion, flitted away.

But there came a time as the year wore on
When the wandering beauty paused,
A-weary of threading the gypsy trail,
And recalled her joy in the grassy vale
Where the rose-red clover bloomed.
But in vain she sought the meadow flower,
Just to live again that happy hour.
The sunbeams had claimed it as their own,
And had ripened its fruitage again to be sown
That some other bright butterfly, pink, gold and gay
Might find a rich clover bloom some other day.

"And what became of the butterfly? Did she die of remorse?"

"Certainly not. On the contrary, she doubtless lived to a good old age, finding plenty of other things she liked to feed upon throughout the later months; and, when the frosts

of autumn finally brought her down to earth, no doubt passed on smiling at fate to the very last. You see, her idea of life is that we were all placed here to make the most of our opportunities, and absorb all we fairly can from those with whom we come in contact. If your clover had wings he, too, would probably dance his merry way through all the meadows and gardens in his world."

"But," someone remarks, "that is just it. He hasn't. He is firmly rooted to a spot he loves, and from which he draws his substance. He is constant and serious, serves a useful purpose, and still he is robbed by every winged vamp that happens to discover him."

"Yes, but probably the clover considers the feeding of bees and butterflies a pleasure, and finds his highest happiness in a free giving of himself. That is one thing that some of us might learn to our own advantage. Anyhow, he nodded and smiled at

Mistress Butterfly as she came his way. If she found him exceptionally sweet and tarried long—as butterflies measure time—to show her appreciation, that was his reward."

"Well, if there is such a thing as reincarnation," the butterfly's critic adds, "and she could choose her own form for her next existence, I hope she will return as a meadow lark, and build her nest close by the roots of that same clover clump. Even the frivolous, you know, have consciences, if they be but touched." There are so-called frivolous ones whose frivolity is merely a cloak assumed, who are true as steel, even when appearing most irresponsible. Such are the devious ways in which our many-colored natures manifest themselves.

Next June another butterfly will drink as deeply from another clover cup. Only not many of you will stop, as I did, to study the proposition. You might be doing something else

seemingly much more important to yourself, but I figure that anything that is of real consequence to any living thing, even though it be only a common red clover blossom, must somehow be of real importance to the universe itself.

You can think it all over in By-Way Land,
The Good and the Evil, too.
In its sunshine and silence you draw so near
To the least thing that lives that, if you give ear
To the message it bears, you are certain to hear
Of the kinship of all in the garden grand
That blooms for you always in By-Way Land.

VII

Purple Martins and the Moon

It's easy to find, this By-Way Land;
It's not far from any man's door.
It's anywhere off the iron and the stone,
Where one may just wander, yet not be alone,
For there's life in the earth, in the stream, in the air;
There are friends by the score who will talk with you there,
And they'll tell you of that which may help you get through,
For, believe me, they're wiser than ever you knew—
These field-folk of By-Way Land.

AN American invented the noisy, clumsy aeroplane. An Englishman discovered the skylark. An hour with the purple martins, and you will understand what inspired the author

of one of the glories of our literature. Anybody could have written the beautiful ode. Only for centuries nobody did. It remained for just one person to do it. Just so with "The Chambered Nautilus." Simple enough, isn't it? You or I or anybody could have worked out the same idea. But we didn't. We recognize the beauty of a lot of these master strokes, and marvel at their simplicity and their obviousness. Of course, we all have it in us; but somehow we don't seem to be able to get it out. I don't know the English skylark. I suppose his flights and his songs are extended far beyond the performances of our more plebeian martins, swifts and swallows; and I suspect, therefore, that it is just as well that Shelley did the job of immortalizing these blithe spirits of God's aerodrome.

Purple martins have at least one quality not possessed by larks: they are emphatically gregarious, and this

adds largely to our interest in their movements. Dwelling in colonies, they not only seem to get on well with one another as individuals, but act in concert in all matters involving the common welfare. Their dominant characteristics are their irrepressible gayety, and their astounding feats in aviation. They did not exactly fancy my standing some twenty yards from the high post that supported their colonial home, for the barracks were filled with the fruits of springtime honeymoons. They circled and wheeled and balanced and turned in almost impossible gyrations, waiting for some overt act on my part that might either reassure or add to their apparent trepidation. Although a stiff wind was blowing over the field, in which I had placed in the early spring their elevated station, they were able to "stand still," so to speak, while on the wing, as they narrowly studied my attitude. This ability of the purple

martin to maintain almost perfect poise in the face of strong atmospheric pressure is worth thinking about. You can see fish doing the same thing against adverse currents. I should say that this is a useful and altogether admirable power at certain times, but not all of us possess it. There is the pressure constantly felt by a lot of country boys and girls, for instance, to leave the farm, and allow themselves to be carried into towns and cities. There is the lure of the office desk, the smart-clothes shop and bright lights, and some of these brave, wholesome lads and lassies will return some day, worn and broken on the wheels that grind forever inside the walls they have entered with high hopes.

If you approach too near a well-filled martin house you will soon be warned away. The parent birds will wheel and circle closely around you, and now and then one that is particularly solicitous will try to make

you think she is about to pick a piece out of your face or neck or ears. I am of the opinion that old Mother Goose had one of these birds in mind when she wrote her famous ditty about the maid who was in the garden hanging out the clothes. If the truth were known, I would wager it was a purple martin, and not a blackbird that "snipped off" that historic laundry girl's precious little beak!

If they have gyrated round about you twelve or fifteen times, without getting rid of you, they may adopt another plan, the counterpart of that used by their lowlier neighbors, the meadow larks, as already mentioned; only the air, instead of the grass, is their home. They will get your attention away from that house at any cost. Surely you will be more interested in watching them perform high above your head than near the ground, and the first thing you know a "flying match" will be put on for your especial

benefit. If you have any regard whatever for their peace of mind and general welfare, you of course permit this clever expedient to work as the birds intend. They will play for hours when left to themselves, just for the pure, unadulterated fun they evidently get out of it; but in the case just mentioned they are only pretending to enjoy themselves. They are really worried, and their mental distress is not altogether relieved until you have put a respectful distance between yourself and the post; whereupon they quickly descend and inspect the house, to make sure that no hocus-pocus trick of yours has robbed them of their young while the feathered fathers and mothers flew so gaily for your entertainment.

A martin in full flight is the counterpart of a skilled skater on good ice. First the quick, sharp, vigorous strokes that work up the necessary speed; then the long, smooth, graceful glide

along either straight or curving lines, according to the whim or objective of the flyer. They even float backward in a breeze, without a movement of their wings. Certain other birds use the same general system, but few practice it with such consummate art. A colony of martins at their evening frolic is well worth watching. You would think they would be ready to quit the air as the shadows fall at the end of long mid-June days, without this apparently unnecessary exertion, but they are tireless. Indeed, they seem to enjoy their lofty twilight revels as farm boys love a plunge in the water at the end of a hot summer day in the fields. Are we not all related? Who can study it all, and still deny it?

Interesting as it is to watch the three-ring circus performance put on by these fine actors each evening, if you will single out one bird and try to follow his flight, you will now and

then observe individual acts almost startling in their daring. On the evening of June 26 the sun was setting in the far northwest, at the end of a day of high temperatures. In the southeast the grey face of a three-quarter moon, preparing to throw down a flood of light, was already visible. Martin-town was busy. Some of the birds were on the wing, and others were sitting on the doorsteps of their colonial apartment house, engaged in animated conversation; some of the remarks being obviously addressed to one another, and other expressions, with equal certainty, were for the benefit of the fledglings inside. I sat on a bench beneath a little clump of trees nearby, trying to translate some of these notes; many of which were beautifully clear and flute-like. In fact, the martin's speaking voice, in such intimate contact as this with his (or her) own, is decidedly better than his chatter in the air.

While I was thus engaged "Billy" was out across the field, putting in an idle hour with her latest toy, a kite. A light southwesterly breeze was blowing, and she had out some three hundred yards of line. The kite was tugging gracefully at its mooring. The martins watched its movements, and presently a few of them were wheeling upward towards it; either curious to know what sort of big new bird had come to compete with them, or bent upon proving their own superior flying powers. At length, having either satisfied themselves that the kite was a harmless creature, or that they had demonstrated sufficiently their own prowess in comparison, they left "Billy" and her kite to their own devices, and reported back to headquarters. Meantime, the sun was dipping low behind the distant tree tops, and the profile of the Madonna of the Moon was becoming more and more distinct, when suddenly a martin

hopped off his perch and headed south. He was alone. At first he did nothing differing particularly from what his fellows were wont to do, but soon he began climbing to great heights. For the most part he rose, like Shelley's lark, "higher still and higher" along easy grades, but now and then made short and almost perpendicular ascents, followed by long curving flights to still greater altitudes. He was surely headed for the moon! That was his evident objective. I followed him as far as a human eye of good long-distance power could follow. The air was clear, and now and then I could make out again the tiny speck, still soaring towards the now fast-whitening orb. At last he disappeared entirely. Let us hope he was favored by fortune in his great adventure, and found in the infinite spaces, so daringly invaded, that which he had sought.

Are sky-birds the only folk who leave their nests and wander far and long

in quest of worlds that really shine by reflected light, and which, if reached, prove but cold, dead, dreary, barren wastes? I could tell you of certain human hopes and aspirations that seemed to be leading up to a fancied Paradise, which faded away as completely as my martin vanished in the vapors of the upper air at the close of this perfect day in June! That he failed to reach that icy wilderness we call the moon is physically certain. That he returned to Mother Earth again is equally sure. Thus toil we all towards some distant light that lures us on, only to turn back at last on wearied wing.

As a matter of fact, you don't have to race up and down the earth and air and sea to learn what little there is to be known about creation. The whole world is in your immediate neighborhood. The same sun shines over your woodlot that lights Mont Blanc. The flood-water that rushed

down that open ditch last week after the big rain, whirling and eddying and plunging over and around obstructions, ever seeking lower levels, was the same thing that you go to see in the Yosemite Valley. The falls there are higher; that's all. As for the giant redwood trees, if you will come with me down the roadside here I will show you a luxuriant big bull-thistle two inches thick at its base, and seven feet high, that towers in majesty above the dimunitive weeds growing about its base, just as imperiously as the Sequoia Gigantea lords it over ordinary forest growths. It's all a matter of comparison.

Instead of wasting time talking about establishing communication with the planet Mars, it would prove much more profitable to try to become really acquainted with our own earthly neighbors; not only those of high but of low degree as well, including the so-called "lower" animals and plants.

The truth is that all, from minnows to Members of Parliament, are but "parts of one stupendous whole."

Life at best is but an incident in the history of worlds. All these whirling spheres apparently had their Genesis in gas and fire, and their Revelation in ice and desolation; and, while the various inhabitants of the earth and air and water—from angle worms and ants, to men and sharks and eagles—are devouring one another in an endless chain of killing and digesting, all alike are marked and headed for the same ultimate physical extinction. The moon has arrived at its supposedly semi-final stage. The "fitful fever" that rages all around ourselves has long since disappeared from lunar depths and plains and mountain heights. If moon-folk ever lived by slaughtering one another as we do, that monstrous, cruel stage of existence has, for them, happily ended. When we reach the original inorganic elements we too,

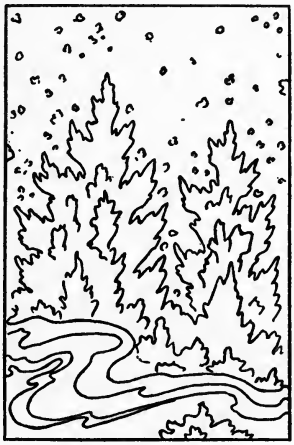
may be at peace. Ashes and humus do not have to hustle around seeking pleasure for themselves, at the expense of the pain and destruction of somebody else. They just exist; that's all. They probably care not whether they continue to exist even as ash or disintegrated vegetation.

If freedom from the struggle for the attainment of things, for the most part unattainable, defines the real objective—the state typified by the so-called finished worlds—then it is clear that universal extinction of life represents progress; hence, instead of bewailing the free use of the knife and gun and gaff upon one another, instead of forming Leagues of Nations to restrain the homicidal tendencies of men, I suppose we had about as well be engaged in twirling our thumbs. Medicines and hospitals represent only dubious means of temporarily delaying nature's inexorable plans. You spray your trees to save them from the

scale, but you are saving or trying to save only in order that you or some of your descendants may later on have the pleasure of destroying the expected fruit.

The moon that tempted the purple martin in his twilight flight, and other celestial bodies that have reached the cold storage stage, are, however, not finished worlds at all. Not yet. They have still another experience through which to pass; cracking open and falling apart, or being knocked into bits by collision—through someone's speeding or bad driving through space—and hurled or hurried pell-mell through black voids at incredible speed, reduced to gas by friction or drawn into some sun having sufficient pulling power to collect the flying fragments! Back, in other words, to the original gaseous state, the cycle at last complete. We apparently travel, therefore, as men and mice and moons and martins, not from a lower to a higher

level at all; but in a circle that has neither height nor depth, beginning nor ending; and the life stage is but an incident in the cosmic journey from vapor back to vapor.



VIII

A "Board Walk" of the Woods

ATLANTIC City's celebrated seaside promenade has nothing on a walk I know skirting the edge of a wood. It may not be as famous among milliners, dressmakers and rolling-chair operators, because, for one reason, the crowds that frequent it wear neither gowns nor bonnets; neither do they require any artificial means of locomotion. They parade in the clothes their mothers gave them, and use their own legs and feet, of which they have plenty. And they are a busy lot.

The walk of which I speak winds its way through tall grass and weeds, wild grape vines, woodbine, oaks and sumacs, and presents frequently a very animated scene. It is, in fact, in high

favor with the crawling, creeping denizens of the underworld through which it passes. It was a real board walk in the early days, but the dampness of the ground beneath and round about soon rotted the sills, and it was long ago replaced with concrete. To that extent it is more up-to-date than its Jersey contemporary. It is used by those who apparently consider that it was built for their especial benefit, for the same purpose as Atlantic City's gay wide way. Ants of all shapes and various breeds—big and little, black, brown and red and small spiders—make up perhaps the majority of those who use it during the heated term. It is not popular with these people, however, from November to May.

It seems perfectly apparent that most of them are simply out for the air; out to see and be seen; out to display their various graces of gait or figure; out to visit and gossip—all

very busy, in short, doing nothing but enjoying themselves. To this latter statement there must be made one exception, for every now and then you can see some able-bodied creature, corresponding one might say to a porter at the Traymore, wrestling with a huge piece of baggage; only he has more speed than the average "smasher" manipulating a wardrobe trunk. First he shoves it along in front, then suddenly whirls about and drags it, apparently without any care as to whether he damages anything or not. Or, maybe he drags it first, and pushes it afterwards, for I don't know which is fore and which is aft in antian anatomy. He may have his forelegs about it or his hind ones. I do not know as to that. Anyway, he makes good progress with it until he strikes one of the little crevices that separate the surfaces of the sections of concrete walks, when down he goes baggage and all, end over end, into what must

seem to him a Grand Canyon of the Colorado. He is game, however. He proposes to deliver that baggage if it costs ten legs, and presently he scrambles up onto the good going again, and repeats the pulling and hauling performance observed before his disconcerting accident.

Ants must be blind, for this one apparently does not see that he is headed or is backing into several bits of dead grass lying on the walk directly in his path. Pitching over and over himself, but never for an instant losing his grip upon his brown burden, whatever it is, he wriggles and climbs and stumbles and blunders over and through this Redwood and barbed wire entanglement, and presently falls, baggage and all, off into the grassy forest depths alongside the edge of the walk.

It does not occur to the ant that by a little bit of a detour he could avoid this formidable barricade of dead grass

in his pathway on the walk. He is like the men who laid out our western highways along rigid section lines. Go straight through, no matter what hills and rocks and swamps and forests lie in the line of the surveyor's instruments! Never mind the lines of easy grade and shortest distance! Be an ant, and blast and flounder and cut your way through granite rock, through bottomless pits, through virgin forests, no matter at what cost to yourself!

I do not try to follow these Forest City ants into the underbrush. It would be too distressing to contemplate the nervous energy they would have to dissipate piloting something twice as big as themselves through the weeds and sumac bushes, into which they ultimately make their way; so I leave them to their tasks, glad only that I usually see the busy, burly athletes in time to avoid stepping on them and thus bring probably useful careers to an untimely end.

I brought an ant into the house the other day with a plant I had been studying, and, as I was dissecting a seedhead, he crawled out upon the table and had a lot of fun with himself. He of course did not like cramped quarters, and tried to get away, but after I had brushed him back three or four times he stood up perfectly erect, looked around and mopped himself with his "feelers," apparently engaged in a real brown study as to where he would try to go next. He pushed and pulled some of my debris round and round, navigating himself with the two main propellers in the middle of his body. These he worked with amazing rapidity. I put him through a lot of stunts, using my lead pencil, which he heartily detested, as a directing force; after which he gave himself a good massage. He made his escape while I was fussing with some thistle-down, and I hope found his way back to the woods in safety.

In recent days there have been a lot of small spiders sprinting up and down or scampering across the walk. Now an ant will run all over the place—unless wrestling with a load of coal or something—without any apparent idea as to where he is going. I don't really think he has or cares. He will go in circles or forward and backward without any sense of direction, without any given point in view, so far as I can see. But these little spider-bodies act as if they knew where they were going, and intended getting there. They seem to sense or recognize your presence when you happen to stop near them. Still they are somewhat erratic in their attitude toward you. I tried stepping closer and closer to one of them when he stopped to rest on some long journey he was making, and each time, for a while, he would start to run, then "stop, look and listen" to see what the next move was to be; finally settling down to the conviction that I was

either afraid of him or meant no harm. I then stamped hard very near to his tiny body, and, whereas this had at first set him off in a panic, he now refused to budge an inch further. Of course, there was nothing for me to do then but move on, allowing him to gloat over the success of his intrepid stand in defense of his own rights.

At night in mid-summer toads are apt to come in out of the woods, and take this concrete walk for their evening strolls. I don't ever want to be a toad. They may have their uses. Shakespeare intimates as much; but neither their shape nor their gait, as they squat or flop clumsily along the walk, appeal to me. It is not a delight to step on one. They are about as vivacious as a lump of mud, and I confess that I prefer the snake that coiled in the grass alongside the walk, and, with open mouth, defied me to strike. He was of a harmless species,

and I admired not only his courage but his grace and sinuous beauty.

There is an almost infinite variety of life to be seen along this same woodland walk, and I prefer it any day or night to that wider one by the sea, so dear to most of you. There are conventions held here that I had rather attend than any that ever assemble there. No long-winded addresses of welcome are delivered; no tiresome technical stuff is inflicted. All is informal; quite the reverse of the conventional. The crows or blue jays may be holding noisy conferences in the branches overhead, but this does not interfere in the least.

By the way, a young jay just out of the nest is one of the funniest and fuzziest of all bird-land "babies." Just a fearless bunch of fluffy blue-gray silk, he will sit on a lower branch near the walk as you go by, and regard you with an air of expectant innocence that makes you wish you had some-

thing to offer him. Fledglings have but one thought in life—food; and then immediately more food; and they never dream but what the whole universe, so far as they have any conception of it by what they see around them, was created for their sole benefit and owes them from the beginning a good living. Men, of course, have exactly the same idea, and do not hesitate to act upon that theory in dealing with all created forms of both animal and vegetable existence.

The more you see of nature in general the more you will be impressed by the essential truth of the old saying about self-preservation. Every created form of life—both animal and vegetable—has its own struggle for existence. All alike seek to thrive and fatten at the expense of someone or something else.

"Big fleas have little fleas
Upon their backs to bite 'em;
And these fleas have lesser fleas,
And so on ad infinitum."

That sweet, omnivorous, good-looking girl you admire so much is composed for the most part of cow, wheat, pig, potato and chicken, with a few fish and onions thrown in for good measure. The cow is grass, the pig is corn, slops and clover, with an occasional spring chicken or lump of coal by way of relish. The girl has the power to develop beauty out of these substances, just as the rose elaborates fragrance and color from black dirt, fortified by common barnyard manure —if you don't put it too near the roots. Wonderful machines, are we not? All building, and then decaying, along parallel lines; with the same old substances worked over a million different times into a million different girls and roses, world without end; the "food cycle" eternally traversed.

Resuming our walk, you all know that the unhurt child fears no injury. Never having been stepped on as yet, your ant or spider is not on the look-

out for the heavy hoofs of those who claim ownership of the walk. If they had been, they would scarcely have survived to warn their sisters, cousins and uncles. So the whole unsuspecting crowd runs round and round, and back and forth, over the smooth, hard surface—evidently placed there for their comfort, pleasure and convenience—all unconscious of threatened danger. Flies, grasshoppers and crickets on the walk will take to cover as you approach, but I find myself always minding my step as I go over the walk with Brobdingnagian boots. I don't know why anyone should needlessly set foot upon an ant—especially one with a bale of hay in hand; so I often have to shorten or lengthen my stride to avoid cutting short some career quite as important to that community doubtless as I can possibly be to my own.

There are other interesting woodfolk to be seen as you stroll along this walk, and I have passed various idle

moments in their midst. For instance, I never saw a lot of children having any more fun than did a thousand newly-fledged moths yesterday morning. I don't know what they were. I don't care particularly as to that. They had mouse-colored wings, ornamented with dark spots. They would measure perhaps a trifle over an inch from tip to tip as they fluttered about in the tall grass and wild-flowers beneath the oaks. They apparently avoided the open sun, and the more adventurous among them made occasional explorations away up among the leaves of the trees overhead. Great journeys, those, I imagine for such frail, tiny people! For one of these to rise from the grass-roots nearly to the top of a good white oak was some record altitude, I should say, in that particular world. They did not stop to feed or rest so long as I remained with them; just danced and frolicked, fancy free, their little hour, as plain a

picture of innocent, unshadowed happiness as earth affords. That night a roaring, blinding wind-and-rain storm tossed and tore and soaked the grove and its underbrush into a sodden jungle, and today I could find no trace of the joyous crowd of yesterday.

You can see just as much of interest on this walk through the woods on the way to Dumbiedykes as around the Marlborough-Blenheim, if you only have eyes to see, and understanding. If you don't believe it, try it.

IX

Why Is A Weed?

THIS has been a week of intense heat and humidity — such as hatched Warren G. Harding out of the National Republican Convention in June a year ago. Don't "shy", dear reader, at this reference. Although I attended some of the sessions of that convention, and am always interested in major politics, still I am not half as much concerned about the governing business these days as I am in haying and "hiking." My first vote for a President was cast for one great Ohioan, James A. Garfield, who came up a poor boy from the farm, and, like Lincoln and McKinley, was shot as his reward. I wonder if the youngsters who are so eager for the blare of

the trumpets of publicity, or high finance, realize that without exception these same self-made, so-called successful men all sooner or later find their way somehow, dead or alive, back to the good old earth; meantime having asked themselves a million times why they ever undertook the journey, why they ever assumed the almost intolerable burdens they were forced to carry as they toiled up the stony paths that have to be traversed on the way to every mountain peak! They reach the summits only to find them frozen, to find no real companionship; and far down beneath them lie the green and smiling valleys and the meadow larks. Fortunately not all our boys of greatest natural capacity take this long trail so barren of real rewards. Many of those who would have made great politicians or financiers have had sense enough to resist the lure of the limelight, and their names are written

deeply in rich soils and bountiful harvests, in the hearts and homes of their fellow-men.

Let us walk where something really wonderful may be seen and studied—such as ragweeds, and their poor relations. You meet more weeds than anything else along a road I often travel. Farmers have to fight them persistently in their cultivated fields, as well as in the pastures. They are aggressive, determined things, and eternal vigilance is required to keep them from taking universal possession. Driven out by the arts of tillage, they resort to fence corners and roadsides where they flourish amazingly, defying dust, drouth, gravel, bogs and man's sporadic efforts at curtailing their activities. And so we naturally ask "What is a weed?" and "Why is a weed?"

I have heard men define a weed as "a plant out of place." Here you see once more illustrated our affectation

of superior wisdom over Whoever or Whatever placed us all here. I should say that such a definition is at best a mere confession of ignorance. Nothing can be really "out of place" that Nature put in a given position. The plants called weeds, left to themselves, are as a matter of course in their proper, natural places. The trouble in their case is that man has not yet been able to figure out for his own benefit a practical use for them. In pursuing his own selfish ends, anything and everything that stands in the way, as he sees the way, is a miserable, useless object having no license to exist.

Weeds are those plants that thrive best in given environments, without artificial seeding, cultivation or other human intervention. We spend all kinds of money trying to save curious Burbankian inventions and eradicating burdocks. The latter are much hardier, only we don't know yet how to

adapt them to our own personal uses. But a few years back we felt just as much contempt for the burdock's lusty roadside brother Melilotus—the sweet clover of every farm-boy's memory. Today it is sown and called a hay crop, besides being an alfalfa indicator. The haymakers who worked that out are about as illustrious citizens, I should say, as the lawmakers who go to Congress and draw the big black letters on the first page.

So we make war on weeds. We make war on weeds for the same reason that we made war on the Indian and the buffalo. In both these latter cases they stood in our way. That was their chief offense. We wanted what they were enjoying for ourselves, and by reason of our superior cunning we got it. Then, in the case of the bison, there was besides the "sport" of killing. Fun to see the big bull go down under a rain of rifle balls, wasn't it? Sport? Yes, I suppose that is what you would

call it. He stood some chance against the red man's bow and arrow, but he had about as much of a run for his existence when civilized men—mounted on fleet horses, brought originally from Europe—arrived with repeating Winchesters, and went after him, as a snowman would have in an open-hearth steel furnace at Midvale. Somebody stood in Hohenzollern's way also not long ago. Belgium was the little weed that had first to be eradicated before the larger growth called France could be reached. Both, from the Boche standpoint, were peoples "out of place." Down with them!

Dandelions are weeds because, for one thing, there are too many of them. If they were rare, and difficult to propagate, they would have a page in every seedsman's catalogue, and be grown in the most aristocratic gardens. The worst enemy I have to contend with in trying to get a lawn underneath the trees at Dumbiedykes

is a creeping "weed" that bears a tiny purple flower, just as perfect of its type as the lobelia I bought from a greenhouse for a border to our geraniums. Still I conform to the "conventions," paying good wages for the destruction of the one, and cash to the florist for the other. Such slaves are we all to inherited habits and accepted usages. None is strong enough to defy the established procedure! Who does is written down as undesirable, unsparingly ridiculed or ruthlessly repressed.

I shall probably be labeled a "weed" myself, or something worse, for having the temerity to express such sentiments. Any man is "out of place" who does not follow the crowd. I realize that, but I also resent it. When I walk down the road, with my stout old stick, visiting with the things I hear and see in every marsh or bush, those who whirl by in a cloud of dust stare as if they had come upon an escaped inmate of some institution.

They have; only they don't know just which one. The walls from which escape has been made are the walls of conventionality; the walls of the biggest "bughouse" on the planet. The world will stand for your playing the part of a strolling vagabond for a time, but if you get confirmed in the habit you will soon be outlawed. So take my advice, and follow the crowd as long as you can stand it; but don't forget to sidestep the merciless procession now and then, when you can find or make an opportunity, and get far enough away from it once in a while to note its follies, and observe its destination.

The moment man discovers some way of making a weed serve any of his own purposes it of course ceases to be a weed. Not that any change has taken place in the plant itself, but the mere fact that it now brings man corn or fodder or sleep or stimulation, as the case may be, promotes it from the

ranks of the despised to the category of the useful and desirable. Merely perfunctory human friendships rest practically upon the same selfish basis. A person who gives us nothing is a person who has no claims whatever upon our consideration. Both as individuals and as nations, that is to an unfortunate degree only too true. So long as a Negro lived his normal, so-called savage existence in Senegambia, from our standpoint he merely cumbered the earth, the same as the "rhinos" and crocodiles. His life was held cheap by white men with gunpowder at their command. When it was found, however, that he could be kidnaped and converted into a servant at a profit, he was fed and clothed and protected—no longer a human weed. The moment it develops that you can use someone to your own advantage, no matter how little he meant to you before, you suddenly take a great interest in him, begin to cultivate him as you would

any other weed that formerly was "out of place," and you now find him good.

We are constantly extending the list of plants being transferred from the "weed" to the utilitarian list; so rapidly, in fact, that it is not especially rash to predict that, as our knowledge takes on a broader sweep, we shall ultimately find that everything which grows has its uses—a rightful place in the world. Then, after we have worked our way laboriously through the centuries to that point of toleration and appreciation in respect to the vegetable kingdom, we may gradually extend our studies to the animal creation, and to our own kind, and find, as the millennium is approached, good in everything and everybody.

I am not an avowed "Scientist." In fact, I scoff at times at certain of their contentions; but I have been told that a trend of thought towards belief in the Universal Good leads me dangerously near to the fold in which many

seem to find the blessing of content. I wish I could bring myself to think that all that takes place is right and good. But I do not. And yet, when I try to analyze my conceptions, I find myself ranged on the side of natural law, and attributing a large share of those things which I consider wrong and unjust, and positively bad, to the attempted enforcement of man-made mandates; to operations conducted under the protecting wings of legislative or judicial enactments and decisions. With whatever Nature ordains or does I find no particular fault; but I question very seriously sometimes the schemes and judgments of mere men. More and more we seem to be relying upon state legislatures and Congress to bring peace and joy and happiness to every door. It can't be done that way.

I once took a keen interest in the science of how to make people proper and prosperous by statutory methods.

In fact, I pursued a university course that led to a LL.B. degree, and the Supreme Court let me by with it, and licensed me to practice. But I never did. I consider, of course, that a knowledge of human law is a very interesting and indeed a useful part of one's education. I have never considered that the time I spent on Blackstone's Commentaries and upon Digests of Appellate Court decisions and dictums was time wasted. On the contrary, it served to show more clearly than anything else possibly could the impossibility of reconciling so-called personal, property, state, national and international "rights" with human nature and primeval plans. What is sound law in one state, or other man-delimited area of the earth's surface, is rejected entirely, and a diametrically-opposite procedure enforced in another.

The study of the civil law seems to lead naturally into politics, and what

is commonly called the public service. I know a little something of both. All citizens should. I do not advise young men to abstain from such study or from seeking such experiences. So long as we live under present accepted forms of Government it is indeed a duty one owes the state. Each generation has to traverse the same circle. Each fancies it is wiser and more progressive than the last, but the end is ever the same. Human nature does not change. You may camouflage a Prussian, but scratch the vari-colored paint with either a pen point or a knife, and the ancestral barbarian is at once uncovered.

Natural law is the thing that now interests me most, but I find no college that maintains a course leading to the degree of Bachelor or Master or Doctor of Natural Law. That would be a title to be proud of, but it is beyond human reach. The most one can be in that study is a "prep" or a fresh-

man. The requirements for graduation are so great that they are beyond human attainment. They "pluck" a lot of men at West Point and Annapolis, but a chosen few get through. Not so in this school of Nature. We can matriculate and spend a little time in laboratories, on the by-ways or in the fields, grasp feebly a few big, general propositions perhaps, and fall back beaten, to give place to the next wayfarer in a world of beauty indescribable and mystery unfathomable; a world in which even the "weeds" we do not fully understand have their designated places, their own wondrous processes, their own lives to live, quite as important to themselves as if we knew their functions, and recognized their allotted part.

X

Free Seed Distributions

THE prodigality of Nature in her ceaseless endeavor at reproduction is something that fairly staggers the imagination. You have only to examine the seedheads of the plants growing along any roadside in September to appreciate this fact. Mathematicians will have to coin new terms and find new and illuminating phrases if they ever undertake a census of the old Earth's annual seed production and distribution. Apparently Nature is more interested in propagating plants that we regard as "pests" than she is in extending the field of what we call the useful or the merely ornamental.

The fact that there are so many highly-organized growths in this world

that have thus far defied all our efforts to make them serve us certainly tends to discredit the theory that all things that live in earth or air or sea were created for our own particular benefit. We shall either have to find some human use for everything that exists around us, or acknowledge that much that we see was placed here to serve some other purpose than our own; which is to admit that we are after all not the only things worth while in this mundane scheme, and that in destroying so-called "weeds," and in classing vast quantities of inorganic matter as "useless," we are only confessing how little we really know.

If thistles, for instance, were not intended by Nature to multiply, and occupy great areas, why did the Old Mother invest them with such resisting powers, and guard the fruit so jealously until matured and ready for consignment to the winged winds? Until this arrogant being called man can find out

what God gave him thistles for he must of course keep on fighting them, and passing laws and making it a crime to allow them to run to seed. Meantime, dear reader, did you ever examine thistle grain in the original package? I suppose that thousands of farmers and farm boys cut down millions of thistles every summer who have never studied a ripening seed-head. Of course, the pestiferous plants are supposed to be cut before the seed is set; but nevertheless many of them escape the scythe, and each one of these has seed enough to thistleize a whole community. Next August locate the purple bloom of our common "bull" thistle, wait until it has turned brown at the tip and the bulbous seed pouch beneath is well distended. Then cut one of these from the parent stem and dissect it. I know where a family of them grew through this hot, dry summer in a boggy roadside into real giants of their tribe, one having a butt

as big as a cornstalk, and standing fully seven feet in height, bearing about one hundred well-filled seedbags.

Note, first of all, that the plant itself is armed at every point with well-sharpened needles for its own protection. Observe then the prickly armor-plate so perfectly over-lapped around the seed pod, and when your knife has let you inside you will see at once that whoever planned the propagation of this plant, not only hedged in the bright, corn-colored seeds with every possible precaution to provide complete security, but furnished each one with, say, twelve to twenty silken fibres, each perhaps an inch in length, which, when the fully ripened grains finally burst their bounds, open out like a flower in full bloom that the lightest breeze may bear them away to spread the species. These seed grains themselves are hard as good wheat, capable of taking care of themselves, one would say, under almost any cir-

cumstances. Note the wonderful color of this maturing grain and the infinite grace and delicacy of the thistle-down itself. There is beauty unexcelled elsewhere in Nature inside each thistle pod that manages to evade man's warfare upon it. I suppose chemists have tried, as yet in vain, to find the secret of the value of this grain and the dainty fibre attached to it. If both are not brought forth for someone's comfort or pleasure, why in the world has Nature gone to such extreme to safeguard its maturity? These seem to be among the few things that even German science has not yet found use for. If they were not brought into the kingdom for our benefit then what moral right have we to seek their absolute extermination?

The Canada thistle is the one special object of man's wrath in this latitude. It disputes doggedly the idea that this country belongs to the plow. It is the one black-listed outlaw of the fields,

and in point of fecundity holds all manner of records. Every state and county and township has a Canada Thistle Law, making it a misdemeanor for any property owner to permit it to run to seed. There are thousands of these seeds ripening within five minutes' walk of where I write, but I am no commissioner for the execution of this law repealing a natural law; moreover, I do not own the soil where they are laughing as their seed-heads swell and grow fat these autumn days. Any man who discovers a human use for the real Canadian thistle-down will have earned a generous reward. It is a fibre so super-refined, so amazingly sensitive to the faintest breath of air, that I would say that in comparison with this prickly pest that far-famed spinner the silk-worm, whose handiwork we value so highly, is a mere novice in the business.

I am no botanist. I claim no expert knowledge of these things. I make no

claim to exactness in dealing with the quantity of seed produced each year by various trees and plants, but I know that if you pick one of those wonderful spherical gray dandelion heads, and look at it closely, you will find yourself in the midst of a miniature forest. The little brown trunks are growing in a pale-green soil, and each sends up a tall white silken tree with a star-like top. No master spider weaving his astounding net, no human lacemaker of highest skill, has ever surpassed the fascinating fabrication worked out by this pest. Here is another case where the seed is equipped for aviation, although in a manner differing from the thistle-down. The thistle grain has sails which radiate from a common centre. Each tiny dark-brown dandelion seed-sheath sends out one fairy thread that puts forth laterals at the top. These, interlacing, form the outer surface of the fluffy globe you never stop to study. How many seeds in

each thistle pod? How many in each dandelion head? I give it up. Still, I should guess that there are not less than 100 grains in each thistle-bag, and perhaps 150 seeds in every dandelion top that reaches fruition. You can do some multiplying yourself, if you are interested.

Then there is that old friend of my youth, the common cockle-burr. I know one use he has, anyhow: his flower provides food for butterflies and other folk. Today I found bugs that looked and acted like own cousins to the honey bee—and one that wore a tight-fitting Nile-green satin suit was fairly reveling in these burr blooms. So, you see, they serve an important purpose to others, if not to ourselves. The burr has no defenders that I know of, but those little oat-like seeds you find inside each thorny pod have doubtless value to somebody, if we only knew about it. I know that they have as many lives as a cat, pos-

sibly good for three years, waiting and watching for you to put in a corn crop where they have been slumbering. Our grandmothers once thought that catnip had its place in the domestic economy. If its "tea" could only be popularized we might send less money annually to the Orient, for there is ample provision made by Nature for its reproduction on any desired scale. Any thrifty plant carries stalks that bear two or three hundred seed sheaths that mature and open at the end, after the manner of your old-fashioned dianthus or garden pinks; each pod with a litter of, say, four little black "kittens," each waiting only the sun and rain of another season to grow up into nice big catnips; and as for old "tansy," she bears in her arms each September enough of her own peculiar feathery seeds to plant an acre.

Knowest thou how the wild mustard maintains its unwelcome presence in the grain fields? Have you calculated

the wild onion's propagating possibilities? Its seed-top has perhaps fifty pods, each with four tiny black treasures ready for business next spring. Pinch these seed pockets, and you will release something delicate in the perfumery line. You may not want it upon your handkerchief; still it is merely suggestive of the real thing in onion odordom. Everybody knows plantain, with its tough mass of fibrous roots and its tall seed stem. I saw one today that was nearly two feet high, bearing seeds for at least twelve inches of its length—five or six hundred of them, I should say, and this same vigorous plant had six or eight of these stalks. It then appears that this exceptionally fruitful mother had borne probably 3,000 of the hard, light-brown seeds, each theoretically capable of germination next year.

Old Helianthus, too, is the parent of children countless. Most folk call him the sunflower. He was once a mere

road-side pest. Now we cultivate and "improve" him. You will find little in Nature more marvelous than the great flaming disc as the fruit of its labors approaches maturity. The colors and the beautiful detail of the huge blossom should make mankind duly humble in its presence. The workmanship is perfect. Here is a case where we have discovered values to be utilized in our own affairs. The modern farmer has found the sunflower a great silage crop, and that the seed produced in such abundance puts fat on animals to which it may be fed, so it is no longer just a weed.

The more you study these things the more you will see that the plants we figure we have the least use for are the very ones Nature tries most persistently to perpetuate by giving them special resisting powers. I have spent many odd hours during which I forgot entirely the printing office, the rapacity of profiteers and tax gatherers,

trying to get a little elementary knowledge of the tremendous preparations made by the innumerable "weeds" and shrubs and trees that live along the fences and in the woodlands looking towards reproduction.

Can you count the seeds which the sumac bushes in one little roadside clump have ready for distribution as the scarlet leaves begin to fall? I have tried, but one autumn afternoon was all too short for any such enumeration. I know that each one of those wine-colored, plush-like clusters carried 150 to 200; that each bush is full of these; and that they are so light and downy that they are easily knocked about and scattered where Mother Sumac thinks they will do the most good. At a rough guess I should say that each fairly developed sumac strews anywhere from 1,000 to 2,000 of its seeds in the grass about its roots. Not only that, but a lot of wild rose bushes have for years made their home around the

particular sumac thicket of which I speak. These are carrying bright red berries, each, when opened, found to be the bearer of a neatly-stowed nest of seeds, with hides as hard as flint, looking not unlike small grains of wheat. Not far away a "wild" or stray asparagus plant was showing its scarlet fruit. Pinch one of these seed houses, and it "pops," exposing in its juices five black "babies," not unlike those borne by your old-fashioned four-o'clocks.

On a wire fence nearby the woodbine grows. One of these creepers is laden with purple berries. A wild grape vine is also here. The fruits have other points of resemblance than their form and rich, dark coloring. Each grape and berry commonly holds four seeds, each with two flat sides, the lot neatly fitted together in globular form—like a quartered orange. Then there are the rich red high-bush cranberries that are much admired each

fall in our dooryard. There is no better shrub to plant along the north wall of your house, or in a shady nook. A flattened seed is fattening inside of each, immersed in liquid red. You will find something interesting also within those scarlet decorations that tell you that your Thunberg Barberry is expecting cold weather soon.

An old wild cherry tree, with a spread of thirty feet or more, bore a big crop this year, and as I walked by it the other day it was filled with robins filled with cherries. Apparently they were so sated that they cared little for my presence underneath the branches on which they sat. In fact, at first I did not discover them at all. It was only when I reached for the tip-end of a limb to test the fruit myself that the first bird made a move. Then the whole party flitted about, disclosing that the harvest was on in earnest. They did not leave the tree, however. It has been a hot, dry summer, and

there is more seed than juice and pulp inside the black-skinned berries. I did not stop to make a calculation as to the number of cherry stones matured ready for planting by this one tree. That would not only have been the task of hours, but I should even then have been compelled to estimate the number that had already been accounted for via the bird route. It is safe to say that there were enough to plant several acres to wild cherries, if any orchardist cared to take up their culture. Unfortunately, from the wild cherry point of view, comparatively few of the stones ever live to respond to the tender solicitations of springtime.

Civilized man does not approve of Nature's prodigality in this business, and if he will only carry his avowed policy of repression far enough the other forms of earth life will doubtless be jolly glad of it.

XI

Improving on Nature

WHAT we call improving upon various forms of animal and vegetable life is of course no improvement at all, so far as the basic materials are concerned. The stringless bean suits our Mary much better than the old type, but the pod has been deprived of its native strength and resisting power. The spineless cactus brings the desert plant within the realms of cattle forage, but it has been shorn of a characteristic that nature had found desirable from the cactus—not the human—standpoint. Freed from artificial manipulation, these changes of form are of course soon lost. Rose-growers have produced the

"Baby Rambler," a low-growing, bushy little shrub, producing its flower clusters profusely enough, and making beds that we agree are most attractive on our lawns; but leave them to themselves for a year or two, and you will find them surreptitiously throwing out long runners, and quietly reverting back to the climbing originals.

So with all our so-called improved varieties of domestic animals. It is only through the persistent application of all the laws known to the science of breeding, developed through generations of experience and experimentation, that we are able to maintain them in the form we deem most desirable for our use, or most pleasing to our eye or taste. Free them from this control, and they would soon either perish from inability to cope with natural conditions, or work rapidly back to hardier types differing decidedly from their present state. Nature's idea of a bovine species suited

to the arid west is the bison. Man-made breeds of fine cattle have now displaced the buffalo, but man has discovered, at no small cost to himself and his herds, that if he expects the artificial successfully to withstand the privations to which animals are subjected in the Rocky Mountain region he must, even in the case of the hardy white-faced Hereford, provide at least occasional support. Hence the hay ranch. Hence the carloads of cotton-seed meal. Hence the feed bills that sometimes more than wipe out all the ranchman's profits.

However, in the entire field of human activities there is no more creditable, no more marvelous, demonstration of man's cunning than in this same line of work. Man cannot create something out of nothing, but give him but one plant or one pair of animals to work with, and there will be scarcely a limit to what he will produce from them in the course of time. You have

only to visit any great agricultural exposition to appreciate that fact. Study the displays of products of our orchards, gardens, pastures and feedlots, visit with the hens, or go to a bench show, and take your hat off to the great plant and animal breeders for their masterly manipulation of the laws of heredity, selection, environment and alimentation in modifying and multiplying varieties and subvarieties in the production of which there seems to be no end.

The study of animal life is an absolute delight. It makes little difference whether it be a canary bird "rough-housing" the tiny swing in his brass cage; a foal by its mother's side in the pasture; lambs or puppies at play; young bulls or big boys bunting the breath out of one another, or elephants trying to be funny. There is every reason for believing that all these, that all animals in fact, find interest also in watching what we our-

selves do. We are possibly as amusing, as puzzling, as great an enigma to them as they are to us.

Strolling down the road the other day I came by a lot in which a drove of young Duroc-Jersey shotes were interned. I stopped and watched them working away at the weeds and rooting for grubs. One of them suspended operations, looked me over for a moment and gave a grunt, which from long familiarity with the species I knew to be a friendly greeting. It said, as plainly as if it had been uttered in good English, "Hello, where did you come from?" He was looking at me intently, knowing well enough that I was a stranger. I said something intended to encourage a prospective conversation, which drew forth a second good-humored grunt, and the pig started to walk slowly towards me. I thought we were in for a pleasant little chat, but just then one of the others looked up, seeing me now for

the first time, and with a snort of warning stampeded the whole bunch—including my erstwhile casual friend—tails up, towards the furthest side of the enclosure; and they did not stop running until they felt themselves entirely safe. I laughed at the frantic foot-race, and suppose they fancied they had scored one on me. Pigs are not the only folk that can at times be hurried into panic by someone yelling "Boo!"

You would be surprised at the extent of the vocabulary of most animals. You may be familiar with the one expression most frequently heard. Most people only know birds and animals by some one or two of their remarks; but among themselves many of them resort to a much greater variety of tones and words than they are commonly given credit for. Whether you observe hens, hogs or humans, there is language everywhere that reflects satisfaction, fear, warning,

love, solicitude, peace, war. Ever hear the talk of cows and calves as nursing time brings them up at the close of day along opposite sides of the pasture fence? Do you need an interpreter to translate the note of deep anxiety in the bovine mother's voice as she sees you haul her blessed "baby" off, possibly to the butcher? Does the child that falls and hurts itself give utterance to anything differing especially from the cries of the pig fast in an opening he cannot wriggle through? Surely we are all akin and in the same boat still, just as when Noah led us into the ark together, two by two, and we may all reach the same old Ararat again some day, and pass out side by side.

I have spoken somewhat at divers times in derogation of the animal called man. I still insist that he is not the God-like creature painted by himself. He is no better, in my opinion, in most particulars, than his fellows of the earth and air and sea. He may be

more clever, but even that is by no means clear. The only question is as to whether he is worse than his kinfolk of the woods and waves. Here my indictment stops. That he is more cruel than any of his fellow creatures does not admit of doubt; not only more cruel to his own kind, but to all other forms of created life, than any other animal or plant that enters into all this mundane mystery. He kills for the pure joy of killing, and in his dealings with all other forms of life knows not the meaning of such a word as mercy. And yet, on the other hand, he is capable of sacrifices for others, is capable of deeds of self-annihilating heroism, that so far as we can tell are unknown to the fauna and flora by which he is accompanied in this phase of the earth's existence. He is a constant contradiction of himself; the super-good so interwoven with the abysmal-bad that he remains the one great puzzle of the ages.

Most of his fellows follow a comparatively simple life; a routine that can be easily traced. You will know to a certainty what to expect from a cow or cat. You can bank on what will probably be done by a donkey or a dromedary. You do not need to figure closely on the actions of a bee or a barracuda. Their ways are fixed, dependable. You know before you plant it what a seed will bring forth at the harvest, but what a man will develop, after he has found his own powers and limitations, the wisest of prophets may not predict. He is the sum of all by whom he was preceded; the composite of all who have gone before—angel today, the very devil tomorrow—and he can no more help being the inconsistent creature that he is than the rest of creation can help being cast in unchanging moulds. He has the fidelity of a dog, the treachery of a tiger; the gentleness of a dove, the fury of a hornet; the patience of

an ox, the cunning of a serpent; the timidity of a rabbit, the courage of a lion. He breakfasts with the birds upon seeds and berries, and banquets with the beasts upon flesh, fish and fowl. All is grist that comes to man's mill. Lord over all, he appropriates for himself the fruits of his own and of all other labor, and stands forth, with all his faults and virtues, at once the best and the worst of all created things.

Wonderful as has been man's work in subduing and bending animal and vegetable life to suit his own ideas, strangely enough he has paid comparatively little attention to the improvement of his own species. The percentage of good specimens of the race in the human family, from the physical standpoint, is lower than among any other class of animals. If you could strip a thousand men, women and children, and line them up for examination and comparison with a

thousand linnets, lizards or leopards, you would instantly confess the truth. Our laws license, protect and encourage the perpetuation of the incapable, the incompetent, the malformed, the undesirables of every name and nature. With the beasts and birds there is only the survival of the fittest. Only the sound and normal ones, or those of superior cunning, can hold their own. The result is splendid uniformity in all the most vital characteristics.

It is only when man begins directing the procedure that the weaklings and helpless begin frequently to appear. No one ever heard of hog cholera getting a wild boar, or tuberculosis claiming a Rocky Mountain goat. Most wild animals die the victims of some other animal's cunning, of starvation—as did the quail in our vicinity one snowy winter—or of old age; and eighty percent of them are fine specimens of their breed as contrasted with, say, twenty percent of equally well-

balanced individuals of our own kind. The comparison is not flattering to our vanity. The pity of it all is that so many men and women are doomed to drag through a weary life, possessed of a really good brain and heart, housed in a wretchedly unfit body. The big healthy "husky," even though he has but limited mentality, glories in his good digestion, laughs and grows fat. He may not gain the fame of frail Robert Louis Stevenson, but he lives his life in solid comfort. He can always eat and always sleep, and, so far as physical existence is concerned, a brawny plumber had it all over the doomed author of "St. Agnes' Eve."

"A sound mind in a sound body" is the only combination ensuring tranquillity and sanity, and yet not one person in a thousand can fill the specification. It is the scarcity of this balance that is responsible for most of the suffering, squalor and misery that afflict mankind. Some progress has

been made along hygienic and even eugenic lines looking towards the application of principles that make for the elimination of defects, and the establishment of desirable conformation and characteristics; but the outlook for progress is not encouraging. Nature does her best to maintain some sort of equilibrium and perpetuate the species by directing Dan Cupid to bring opposites together. A brunette is apt, therefore, to seek the companionship of a blonde, and vice versa. Those lacking in physical strength are the greatest admirers of overflowing vitality. A poetess is attracted by a pugilist, and probably it is best that such is the case. If athletes only wedded athletes a race of magnificent human animals might result, but mental refinement would presently disappear. If the artistic only intermated with their own we might some day have fewer "daubs" in our galleries, less trash in our literature, and

not quite so much "jazz" in our music; but who would have body-bulk enough to move our mountains and pianos? So it is more than likely that we shall go on as we are, trusting to blind chance; meantime enlarging our penitentiaries, sanitariums, homes for the feeble-minded, poor farms, divorce courts, and military establishments.

There is no fact more thoroughly demonstrated in animal breeding than that out-crossing gives fresh vigor, and that long-continued inbreeding within narrow limits brings inevitable deterioration; but in the face of this known fact royalty still insists upon marrying only royalty. Hence Hapsburg imbeciles and Hohenzollern irresponsibles. They are themselves to be pitied, for there is only irresponsibility, idiocy and lunacy forced upon them. They never had a chance from the beginning, and it cost the bloodiest war in history to get rid of them. A degenerate prince of the blood, who loved and married a

healthy, wholesome peasant girl, was forced to give her up for some flat-chested, stupid daughter of imperial pedigree, who had much better have been the wife of a six-foot guardsman. Likewise money must mate with money; or rather the money-ruined cigarette "Johnny" must marry the petted product of some millionaire's nursery, under penalty of disinheritance. Hence an increasing brood of pearl-decked dolls and drawing-room drones. Conventionality! Always and forever conventionality! Few are brave enough, or foolish enough, to defy it. Mrs. Grundy has too sharp a tongue, and "Town Topics" comes out too regularly.

If men would spend as much time and money and thought upon how to perfect or control the physical and mental standards of the race by natural processes, as they do in experimentation upon animals and plants under domestication, the imagination fairly

staggers under the possibilities involved. Venus de Milos and Apollo Belvederes on every street; Homers and Shakespeares at every turn! Saints on request, and sinners while you wait! Subdivisions of types world without end! We could breed the nose off the face, and the hair off the head! Detectives with scents as keen as a foxhound's would simplify the enforcement of the "search and seizure" laws! Men with legs so long that stepladders would be useless supplied on application! Men with one leg or no legs! Women without tongues! Pickpockets without hands, and footpads without feet! Why not? See what we have done with dogs!

The trouble is that sooner or later old Adam would break loose and interfere. The managing director of all this would be defied. Some belle of the Russian wolf-hound style of architecture would set the pace by eloping with some fascinating swain of a

Dachshund type; a strongly-bred Hercules be successfully "vamped" by a pretty pigmy; the baldest man of the hairless family lose his un-thatched head to some siren Sutherland sister; and thus in the end we should no doubt find that Nature had resumed the sway she may have been forced temporarily to relinquish. You may set aside her laws for a time, but none can permanently nullify the fiats sent forth when deep first called unto deep, and the primal morning stars sang joyously together.

"There never was a goose so gray
But soon or later some fine day
A foolish gander comes that way."

XII

"What's in a Name?"

AROUND August first you could at one time find a lot of "Chicagos" blooming alongside the woodland walk of which I have already spoken. Of course, I use the term in its alleged aboriginal sense. You can find them almost anywhere in the Skokie, Des Plaines and Calumet basins, if you know where to look for them. I know little about Indian dialects. I don't know whether ethnographic experts O.K. the story that the word Chicago means wild onion, or whether that is just a fling at the big, noisy, dirty work-shop by the lake, originated by once jealous rivals. Furthermore, I don't care whether Chicago means wild onion or not. In the first place, the

plants in their free, wild state are as inoffensive as the "flags" and lilies that precede them in the floral procession of the year in our marshes, meadows and sunlit glades. It is only after man sets to work "improving" on the wild plant for his own use that the onion becomes obtrusive. If you break the flower stalk of a "Chicago" you will detect a faint suspicion of its more strenuous garden relative, but that is all. In the second place, the word Chicago is no cheap, brainless copy of some Old World appellation. It is truly and distinctly American, besides being euphonious. For that reason the hub of the Mississippi Valley should be proud and happy in her name—even if she does have to "make-up" terribly in her effort to become beautiful. Come to think of it, what other city of major importance in North America possesses a name that has truly New World flavor? Search the whole list from coast to coast, and

you can find no other name among them all that can lay the least claim to originality.

New York might have served very well for some sleepy little hamlet stowed away somewhere among the New England hills. You have only to visualize the dear, old-fashioned Yorkshire capital to realize how incongruous is the name as applied to the community that now fondly imagines that the sun rises and sets at the corner of Broad and Wall. The solemn old minster, the immaculate, ivy-clad arches of St. Mary's abbey, the crumbling Roman wall, the green fields stretching away towards the grassy domains of hereditary, fox-hunting squires. The original a picture of peace and poise set in a pastoral paradise. The copy everything which old York is not. St. Petersburg has become Petrograd. A stroke of the pen would make New York what it should be—Manhattan.

Fancy calling still the old home of the first Continental Congress Philadelphia! Are we so hard-pressed for indigenous, appropriate names as to be compelled to stand always for such an academic Athenian anesthetic? Maybe the name accounts partly for the traditional torpor in which the native-born Philadelphians are commonly supposed to be profoundly steeped.

Jumping across the continent to the western coast we find San Francisco, borrowed from decadent Spain, with the Sierras near at hand bristling with beautiful New World designations, and in the upper Mississippi watershed St. Paul and Minneapolis. The former had as well been John-the-Baptist, and the latter is a monstrous combination of Indian and Greek. And all the while the plains, prairies and forests, from whence they have derived their strength, blossomed everywhere with fascinating native appellations. In the

lower valley St. Louis and New Orleans, both French, and therefore, out of place. Why not let those names pass to rest, along with juleps, "toddies" and other relics of dead Bourbon dynasties?

The answer to all this is of course the loyalty of the early explorers and colonizers to their respective homelands, but the fact remains nevertheless that Chicago alone owns the only typical North American name in the entire list of cities of the first magnitude. But we have forgotten to refer to the Mother City of them all—Boston. This is not only English, but in its etymology awful to contemplate, from the standpoint of the Back Bay. Boston = Bos-town, Bos = cow. Now, Cow-town, or Cowton, would doubtless exactly meet Commonwealth Avenue's idea of what Chicago—as the packinghouse center of the world—should have been called, but to have it saddled upon the home of the old

Saturday Club, with its memories of Holmes and Longfellow and Emerson and Lowell and Hawthorne and Whittier and Thoreau and Prescott, of Dana and Appleton; saying nothing of the Adamses, the Hoars, the Quincys, the Sumners, the Brookses, the Cabots, the Phillips, indefinitely, it is close to crime. But it isn't Boston's fault. The Pilgrim Fathers began with Plymouth, and scattered the dearly-loved old English names all along the coast of this New England of their dreams. They came with their hearts filled with gratitude to Almighty God for this haven of refuge from persecution, and with inbred loyalty to the crown; but their new environment soon told upon their character. The shaggy, rock-bound shores imparted stern resolves.

Every loyal American living west of the Hudson and south of Hoboken owes it to himself to visit New England. Every un-American, no matter where he is enjoying the unappreciated

blessings of our institutions, should be made to stand in front of a lot of the many patriotic shrines so numerous in the North Atlantic states. It is rural New England, however, rather than her capital city, rich as she is in all that stirs our pride, that must appeal most powerfully to those who go to worship there, and draw Americanism pure and unadulterated from her hills and dales, her mountains, lakes and rivers, her rugged headlands, shelving beaches, sea-girt isles and ancient elms; and if we may now turn from town to country—which I am always more than ready to do—let us revert at once to trees.

In the sleepy old town of Ipswich, with its venerable elms, its trim colonial homes, its knitting factory on the winding stream, its traditions of generations gone, there may be seen a striking monument to the American Union of States. Thousands of tourists have hurried by it year after year,

but few have ever even seen it. I am not quite sure that the villagers themselves yet comprehend its real significance. They know that it is there, but, like most of us, they place comparatively little value upon that which stands nearby their daily pathway. Doubtless they have all gazed upon the historic shaft of Bunker Hill. All know of course the Minute Man at Concord Bridge; but as this their own memorial graces a quiet thoroughfare through which they pass each day as they go their respective ways, it rarely receives from them so much as a passing glance. Neither bronze, nor marble, nor good gray granite from the distant hills has been used in its creation; yet it has thus far successfully defied the lightnings and the gales, and withstood the wearing tooth of Time. In fact, the lapse of years has only added to its stature, strength and dignity; and each recurring springtime brings it added increment.

The story goes that once upon a time a handful of seedling elms was planted as a cluster—plunged into the ground together, with their tiny rootlets intertwined—and covered with the earth out of which the miracle was ultimately to be wrought. Rejoicing side by side in the sunshine and the showers of early May, and closely bound together in common defense against deep January snows, the infant elms began the journey upward still pursued. There was friction, more or less, through those early years between their bodies as they struggled each for self-development; but in due course of time their close affiliation, their slow but sure expansion and their intimate relationship resulted in the final fabrication and exchange of stout-fibred ties, uniting them solidly at last inseparably into one; the noble federated trunk now holding high aloft a dozen perfect elms, with rare, wide-spreading wealth of pendulous top and towering

majesty. This great arboreal Atlas, bearing upon its shaggy shoulders a leafy world, uniquely graphic of colonial beginnings and development into the real nationalism of Daniel Webster, stands, as it should stand, upon Massachusetts soil.

New England is particularly lovely in the summer months. I am not so sure about the winter. From Whittier's poem, and judging from the forethought manifested by the manner in which the farm-steadings—from parlor to woodshed and cattle stalls—are constructed under continuous (and usually zig-zagging) roofs, one can imagine that if Job had lived somewhere up in the notches of Bretton Woods the Lord would have omitted from his "calling down" of the afflicted patriarch the pertinent query, "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?"

The Yankees have capitalized fully the charms of their summer-land, and builded the broad, smooth roads over

which the tourist gold gladly rolls its annual way into their midst. It is a wonderful playground for tired city folk and western-bred people unfamiliar with its satisfying scenarios. It is rich in memories, and makes many shoe buttons. Every hamlet has its story of patriotism, and its store for supplying gas and oil at Mt. Washington prices to the producing tourist. It is in certain respects a finished country, compared with California. The street car lines in and about Gloucester, for example, demonstrate one phase of this condition. The cars have been sold, and the rusting rails are fast disappearing in the cement in which last August's sun imbedded them. Even the sacred cod is no longer its old-time source of cash and credit to the quaint but now decaying base of operation against the Newfoundland "banks."

Finis is a sad word to affix to the tale of a once great business, but, un-

less something happens soon to revive the deep-sea trade, it looks as if the traditional baked potato might soon be looking in vain for its erstwhile boneless boon table companion. Nearby, on the stocks at Essex, may be seen the keels and ribs of a few sailing vessels under slow construction, where in the good old days great "clippers," the pride and glory of the whole New England coast, once had their christenings. While the fine old Gloucester fleet is fast fading away, still the docks of these famous old-time fishing towns are not yet wholly abandoned. In fact, the cod-curing plants are still extensive, and at times active. The clam-diggers and tenders of lobster traps still ply their trade, but pessimism seems chronic in a good part of New England; farmers competing with fishermen in bewailing the evil days which they claim have fallen upon them.

The Yankee himself hasn't much to work with. The sea is more productive

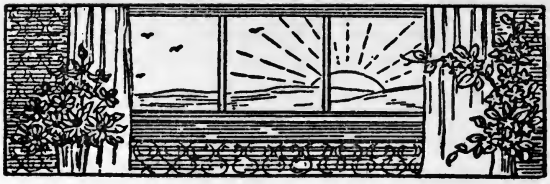
to him than the soil; but he certainly has a genius for assembling, manufacturing and distributing merchandise. He can get nothing much out of Mount Monadnock, but just watch him make and sell mouse traps! There is not a great deal to be had from a sterile, stony soil, covered with scrubby brush and straggling second growths, save blueberries; but observe him harness that brown water down there in the stream, and grind out toothpicks. What the village Edison has done in a thousand ingenious ways for the remoter nooks and corners of this resourceful land farsighted financiers have wrought upon a prodigious scale in the Lowells, Lawrences and Lynns of a densely-populated territory. Everything known in manufacturing and merchandising, from watches to worsteds, from shoes to ships, from earrings to engines, is on the list of New England's inexhaustible line of "notions," luxuries and necessities.

They have no metals, but that doesn't matter. They go and get them. They might grow wool upon their fallow hills and mountain slopes, but they prefer to lay Australia and the west under tribute. They have no hides, but they know where they are to be had, and behold the leather! They produce no meat to speak of, but pay the cornbelt for it in fish-hooks and underwear.

There are localities still where farming as a business yet exists, and good farming it is, too, in many instances; but along the beaten trails you get more scenery and thrills than real knowledge of what New England agriculture is capable of under scientific handling. "Through fields of clover" you may still "ride to Dover," if you approach it along the right road, and if you get far enough back from the main highway you will have a chance now and then to work your Klaxon on "Old Dobbin" and "the shay." Hamm the tailor, and Boucher the barber, are

also still in business there; at least their signs so indicate.

Wonderful old New England, narrow, provincial, self-centered, with all your faults and follies we love you just the same. In resisting tyranny, in exploiting the Seven Seas, in defending your own integrity and the national authority, you have not only made yourself great, but thrown millions into the laps of distant states and territories, enriched the world of science, art and literature, and remain now, as of yore, a prime factor in a new nation's destiny. The only trouble is in the borrowed name you wear. There is nothing English about you. You are American to the core. If you don't believe it, go visit Calvin Coolidge or Cape Cod.



XIII

The Call of the Unknown

WHAT is the fascination of a distant prospect? And then, after you have traversed the space that lies in between, what is the still more compelling call of the old haunts? Any number of young folk on the farm will eagerly answer the first of these questions and with perfect assurance. And, if you will then wait for about forty years, you might put again the second of these queries.

Man is the only animal that fails to "stay put" where he was born and bred. Eden is, of course, the spot of your nativity, but we all hear and hearken to the call of the eternal snake, and set out on our wanderings through the wilderness. The so-called inferior

animals are a sane and satisfied lot. Certain birds of the air and fishes of the sea have one ground for mating and starting their young in life, and another, far away, for some other purpose best known to themselves; but this is a shuttle proposition—just forward and backward along well-established lines. The purple martin nests in the north, and winters in Central America. It never occurs to him to try for something better, or at least different, in other corners of the earth. The sea turtle swims to some distant sandy shore to plant her eggs, and returns to her accustomed waters. The elephant has never even considered the question of a trunk line from Cairo to Capetown, but is content always with his own deep jungle trail. In the classic case of Christopher Columbus, however, we find reflected the restless, roving spirit that lurks ever in the human brain. Those caravels are commonly credited with having conferred

an inestimable blessing upon the world, but don't forget that this credit is accorded only by that comparatively small percentage of the animal creation that happens to possess both human form and a white skin. Ask the myriad ghosts of vanished races, placed in this so-called New World in the primeval assignment of territory, and you will be told that the discovery of America was a catastrophe, having no parallel in history. There were at least two Wild Pigeons saved from the flood, but not one out of millions has survived the white man's subjugation of this continent. Yes, it was a fine stroke of business for Ferdinand and Isabella, I suppose, but even they were finally beaten to all that was best over here by other creatures of their own species, possessed of superior enterprise, persistence and cunning. First, men despoil a far country of its indigenous life, and then fight among themselves for the right to exploit it

to its last resource, each for his own benefit.

A friend of mine, who had his health shattered by twenty-five years' confinement behind steel bars of his own making, bought a little place near Dumbiedykes the other day. You can hardly see into his enclosure, so thick are the native forest trees still growing round about the house. He has crawled back deep into the woods; in other words, just as a caribou would do when very sick or badly wounded, there to philosophize upon his past life and incidentally, perhaps, give nature a chance to restore ebbing strength with the balm that exudes from every leafy Gilead, whether in the Holy Land or the mountains of North Carolina. Holy Land, did I say? All land is holy, wherever it is, but some people don't seem to find this out until they have first exhausted city pavements.

I caught my friend yesterday evening studying the western horizon at sun-

set. Not that there is anything particularly criminal in that form of occupation; but you know we practical folk have a way of sneering sometimes at the fellow who can see anything worth a second look in the plunging of a great globe of fire through cloud-belts into the dark unknown.

It is a pleasing prospect that lies between our doors and the far-away place where fresh pictures are painted every evening. Rolling grass-lands, wide open spaces between little groups of friendly trees—maple, willows, oaks; in the foreground a bit of water with a foot-bridge; and, at the edge of our little world, low hills covered with forest growths. We can see, and we know all about everything that has place in the nearer view, but, "hang it all," remarks my friend that Carnegie trained beneath Bessemer fires, "what is there about those woodlands we can see away out there in the west that invariably catches my eye, and excites

a curiosity in my mind that I myself can't quite understand?"

"Ever been over there?" I inquired.

"No," says he, "but I am going come day."

There you are again. The lure of latitude and longitude! Ever the unsatisfied longing for that which is somewhere else.

"There is something about it, I suppose," I venture to suggest, "that kindles your imagination."

"Evidently there is," he said, "but I never knew before that I had any imagination."

Thus another soul gives testimony to the universal human wanderlust. To be sure, the Eden in which he and I spend our vacation days has within itself every attraction that can possibly be found when he makes that little journey to the sunset ridge. In fact, after he has tramped about those stiff clay hills he will just as surely sense the call of the vine and fig tree he has

left behind, and be satisfied to seek again the spot from whence he first saw the distant El Dorado glowing in the golden glories of a dying summer day.

His subconscious thought had been of course that within those mysterious depths there must be something he would like to have, the world-old human thought that something that would in some way profit him must be lurking there, and could be reduced to his own possession. In the days of his millionth grandfather, when men had to range far afield for meat and drink or booty with which to deck their huts or caves, it would be red deer or crystal springs or gold, or the head of a hated enemy, that would have tempted. No need of that in this present case, of course; but the primal instinct is latent still in all of us, and only waits the hour of its awakening. My friend will find no venison in those hills, nor flowing fountains. There is

neither iron for spearheads nor scalps to be brought home now in triumph. But he will have obeyed the impulse, that cannot be resisted now any more than it was by his red predecessor who lived, as he now does, in Midlothian wood. Thus do we all confess the nomadic past.

Once upon a time a sturdy Virginian, born somewhere along the river Rappahannock, took unto himself for mate one of the fairest of the Valley's maids. Tradition described her as gentle of birth and speech, sweet-tempered and refined, fitted in her early bloom by all the endowments of inherited beauty of mind and body to grace the highest Old Dominion circles. I can personally vouch for her beautiful traits of heart and mind, for as a little child I was fortunate enough to discover her irresistible charm, and discern her mental grace. The first letter I ever penned was addressed to her (in red ink at that), and a long correspondence

ensued, continuing all through my youthful years. But I am ahead of my story.

The British had just relinquished, at the point of colonial bayonets, the soil which they themselves had wrested from the French and Indians; and round the evening fire strange tales were told of wondrous lands and fame and fortune awaiting those who had the courage to cross the mountains and breast the hardships of pioneer existence. For, in the distant west, beyond the great blue domes of the Appalachian ranges, lay Kentucky and the broad Ohio. The "savages" had been coaxed, cajoled, beaten, bought or driven out of their own great inheritance, and with them sank the power of France. A Government, in grateful recognition of the services of soldiers of the Revolution, made generous grants of some of the richest lands in the world, and the race was on. The magnet beyond the Blue

Ridge was pulling hard upon the elemental impulse, and it drew heavily upon the flower of old Virginia's stock. Some went on to great riches and rewards, enjoyed to this day by their descendants. Others fell victims to the stress and exposure attending the crude migration; and still more of them, spurred on by the goading of this same insatiable thirst for gain and adventure of which I am speaking, never attached themselves long enough in any one spot to really take root and get a start. Ever they were hearing voices in the air! Ever did they watch the sun setting still further west, and on the morrow they were on the trail for "over there."

Spring was stealing softly northward from the southland when the particular Virginian of whom I write took the bridle path for the Promised Land. In fancy we can see the scene. The peach tree bloom had already come and gone in sunny nooks, and

apple blossoms shed their snowy fragrance. The orioles and tanagers were singing of an earth re-born, as the young wife said a tearful farewell to her Shenandoah home; drawn into the maelstrom of one of the most significant of all human migrations in our country's history. All her accustomed comforts left behind forever; for in her case these were never to be quite regained. She did not know that this was to be her fate. She had youth and hope and faith, and a Good Book I have often seen went with her into the western wilds. And she could ride with any man where sound-limbed Virginia mounts could climb.

I have stood upon the old Indian trail over which they and countless others passed in their great adventure, at the point where they rested for the night, where now "The Greenbriar" in all its beauty ministers in modern state to those who know White Sulphur Springs. A monument here fit-

tingly commemorates the flowing of that human tide. On and on, still further on, they passed, till presently the valley of Kentucky, in all its dreamy beauty, opened far below. The axe and plow were soon at work, and another little home had come into existence, but not for long. The Ohio River's current called. Beyond its channel lay another Paradise! The spirit of unrest would not be stilled in the young man's heart. Children had come to share whatever might betide, and, against the mother's mild but useless protest, a second journey was begun. Surely something more to be desired was yet ahead.

The spinning wheel was set to work, and deft fingers plied the loom. Good homespun garments came from hands that had been more familiar in the earlier days with embroideries and laces. Westward! Northward! God knows where! The river is crossed in safety. The Miami reached. But not

yet. "Wait till we see what is still beyond." Golden opportunities sacrificed at almost every turn of the wagon wheels! Next the Scioto and its little tributaries must be explored.

Long years after this hegira, as a boy of twelve, I was part of the impedimenta connected with a memorable visit made by my parents to this second pause in the wanderings I recount. Mill Creek! That was the little stream that coursed by home number two. An old covered wooden bridge led across to the farm where the Virginia gypsies had made another stand. Probably it it there yet. I never heard of one wearing out. Sound timbers and honest workmanship went into such constructions in the good old times. Only a few weeks ago I saw a railway bridge of this same old-fashioned type still in use somewhere in the New Hampshire hills.

Again the axe! Huge trees came down to make a clearing for the corn.

These folk had little use for the open country or outlying uplands. They were woodsmen and loved flowing water. "Log rollings," with a handy torch to consume the noble oaks and hickory, the walnut and the beech, were in their eyes an economic necessity. Then the "barn-raising" and the "house-warming;" followed later by the "husking-bees" where a kiss, by fixed unwritten law, was passed with each red ear uncovered! The family grew in numbers, but progressed not especially in worldly goods. And, sure enough, the prairies of the Mississippi soon began their mute appeal. Night after night it was discussed. The mother wept, but made no real complaint. She came of a race of good soldiers. One sad day the deed was signed that set the father free again—free to chase once more the western horizon.

Why dwell upon the toilsome struggle over-land? I hope "the moon was

fair" the night they crossed the Wabash, and that the poor tired mother and her flock, the horses and the cows that trailed along behind, and the family dog that lay under the canvas-covered wagon while they slept, found rest and strength renewed each time they halted on their way across central Indiana and Illinois. There was a place called Iowa, said to be richer far than all the rest. Not even the wild "Father of Waters" at its flood could set bounds to this iron-hearted farmer of the Rappahannock. The mother's heart was breaking, but what of that? Grand grass and deep, black soils were being traversed from sun to sun, but "nothing doing." The old whip cracked, and the wagons creaked and the horses sweat, and the cattle lagged, but on, ever on! Some day we'll stop and build another cabin in a wood, if there only be a creek nearby. The dog's tongue hung out, but he alone of all the company was

ever ready for the road. So at last the broad prairie land, some five days' pull beyond the Mississippi, was reached, and, amidst a world of wild flowers that made the vernal earth a garden of glowing beauty, a stake was planted. I was born, in after years, in the log house set upon that spot. My father was one of the boys who made the journeys from the old Kentucky home. The lady of the Shenandoah was my own grandmother of sainted memory.

To those who stood for all my various misdeeds as an average and growing youngster, I owe a filial debt that, unfortunately, can now never be repaid. There are both words and deeds I would could be recalled. Like most other children, I suppose I did not half appreciate my own parents, and all they did for me. There breaks out again, you see, the same old human fault. That which is nearest, and with which we are most familiar, sel-

dom seems as satisfying or desirable as something else the other side the hill. I never saw the old Virginian whose vagabondage I have here briefly traced. He died before my time. Had he lived long enough I have not a doubt but that he would have wound up somewhere around San Francisco Bay, and then been sore because he could not head overland for China. He was a Romany, sure enough, and when I go down the road alone, as I so often do, as referred to elsewhere in these rambling records I "reckon" (to use a good old southern expression) that he lives just a little bit in me again.

Be that as it may, I cling with a feeling I can't resist to the fine gold of the grandmother on the paternal side, of whom I have spoken at such length. Maybe I am too partial to her, but I am proud to be of her blood, even if only twenty-five per-cent. If there is that small proportion

of real good in me, as against seventy-five percent potentially or actually bad, it surely came from her. A martyr to the cause of settling the western wilderness, she uttered no word of reproach, but let her sweet, refining light shine all about her to the end. And there were others like her; others of whom similar stories could easily be written. So let this passing reference serve as an humble tribute to a noble type now gone still further on beyond the sunset gates!

XIV

An "Indian Summer" Dream

Brown autumn brings beauty to By-Way Land
There is mist on the distant hills;
There is mystery brooding o'er forest and field,
And down 'mongst the corn-shocks on sharp, frosty nights
There are shadowy figures and many strange sights
To be seen in the moonlight of By-Way Land.

JOHN McCUTCHEON'S great cartoon places the artist at once in the front rank of distinctively American poets. It gives vivid expression to thoughts that have come to thousands who know and love Longfellow's "Blessing of the Corn Fields," and realizes the visions of boys who have heard and seen strange things late autumn nights when "the frost is on

the pumpkin" and the grain is "in the shock."

There is no reasonable doubt about it. The spirits of the Red Men do begin skulking stealthily in and out among the trees that skirt the edges of a cornfield just as soon as the leaves turn brown and the soft blue haze appears on distant hills. I have thought sometimes I saw them out on the open prairie lands where so much of the maize of commerce is now grown, but was never quite certain as to that. If you would make really sure of seeing them you must choose a field that has been cleared from what was once virgin forests, or one that is bordered by native timber still standing. Come with me into Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky or Old Virginia, and I will find you many such.

It is where the lodges were pitched, where bears and wolves and deer, wild turkeys and wood pigeons had possession; it is where squaws once planted

and harvested the corn, while the braves were hunting game for winter stores, that the ghosts of the vanished races always come when the evening shadows fall. It is in the midst of such environment that the mysterious, elusive shapes appear. The rustling of the oak leaves and the drying corn blades, as the night breeze passes, will always start them from their silent places after there has been a heavy frost. Personally, I will testify that I never saw an Indian until the nuts were falling in the woods, and the tips of the white and red and yellow ears protruded from the husks; so I have come to understand that the shadowy people of the Indian Summer nights are real children of the harvest, and that in some way—known only to old Mother Earth herself, and to the golden sun, the moon and stars, the lightnings and the frosts—these spirits are released from bondage only when a certain cycle is complete. Hence I

always waited with an interest and a curiosity quite irrepressible the first premonitory signs.

One thing I know is true: wherever the walnuts and the beech, the chestnut and the hickories are most abundant, and wherever the corn is heaviest, there you are most certain to see the red folk of the mists at their various tasks or different weird rites. Along a little river that once ran between two wooded banks, just as in the days of Pontiac, past one particular bottom field, I have often seen near the farther shore the dim outlines of long canoes, propelled by dusky paddlers, swiftly on their noiseless way. I always wished I had the courage to hail or halt these apparitions of the night, and ask them to reveal their field and forest secrets, but usually some night bird would sound an eerie warning cry, just at the wrong instant, and my opportunity was gone. Besides, they were never really quite near enough. In-

deed, I always found that they were moving onward, ever onward, towards some goal unknown.

Once upon a time a few of us resolved upon a real adventure in this quest. We would build a bonfire, and, wrapped in blankets, spend the night upon the crest of a wooded ridge that overlooked the haunted stream and cornfields down below. Maybe we should discover something. Maybe great things would happen. Maybe our flaming signal would be seen and answered. It might be that we should all be captured and carried into captivity far away. It might be that bears or catamounts would eat us up! But the blood of hardy pioneers was in our veins, and would not let us rest until the great proposal had been carried out.

The darker the night we thought the better for our purpose, and if the air were keen and nipping we had all the more chance of starting something; so up the hill the little band of scouts

marched valiantly to the test. Soon the objective point was reached, and it did not take boys very long to plan a primitive camp. Dry logs were plenty, and by the time the evening glow had gone all was in readiness. Against big rocks the camp fire soon was blazing merrily, the magic circle formed, and the vigil was begun.

We were all familiar enough with the old yellow-backed dime novels of that day, with their hairbreadth escapes of the early settlers, of Daniel Boone and Simon Kenton and the rest, to tell stories calculated to frighten anyone half out of his boots, even under ordinary conditions; and I am sure I would have been quite willing to renounce the enterprise after an hour of this, if anyone else had suggested it, but no one did. So we watched and talked and listened and waited for a long, long time.

Night hawks and whip-poor-wills and bats and owls sound all right when

you are a boy, and safe and snug inside the house, but somehow in those woods that night they were uncomfortably close at times and busy, and by and by two great big yellow eyes peered at us out of the blackness of a thicket. Maybe it was Reynard, the fox. We knew he lived up there somewhere, but whoever or whatever it was turned tail quickly enough when we shouted, and we heard him beat a quick retreat. It was not long then, as a matter of course, before we all began seeing things in the outer edges of the firelight; nothing definite, to be sure, but fantastic shapes that disappeared as quickly as they came. Then came a call from old Brer Skunk. There was no mistaking his identity, but he was too familiar a friend to excite particular comment. But still no Indians! By and by the Sandman came, and one by one, as the fire burned lower and lower, we must have drifted quite unconsciously into Dreamland. My

companions of this camp have always declared that nothing, absolutely nothing, was seen or heard that even hinted of Indian spirits through all that livelong night, but I know better.

It was somewhere in the early morning hours when I suddenly realized that something big was brewing in the gloom. I found myself sitting upright, gazing intently into space. The embers all were ashes now, and the one thing that fixed and held my thoughts was the brightest, biggest star I had ever seen, shining like some great headlight low in the eastern sky. There was just a suspicion of the coming dawn in a faint gray tint below the glowing planet. Its radiation was sufficient to cast a wavering glow upon the river, fields and in the woodland spaces. And then, strangest of all strange things that ever came to me in all my life; believe or disbelieve all ye who listen to my camp-fire tale, as you may please, I swear to you that there before

my startled gaze appeared at least a million Indians, plainly approaching the sleeping camp! That may sound an extravagant statement, but, writing seriously and after the lapse of many years, I will say that this is a very conservative statement as to the impression made upon my mind at the time the event occurred.

My first impulse was to arouse the other boys that they might see the spectacle, and participate with open eyes in whatever fate impended, but, to my astonishment, I could not speak. I know I tried, but only inarticulate sounds escaped my lips. Moreover, I found I could not move; so transfixed was I with terror. Mute and motionless I sat as the Indians closed in upon me. Some were in war paint; the traditional eagle feathers were everywhere in evidence. Bows, arrows, tomahawks, war clubs, knives and native drums revealed that some at least were on the warpath; still there

were whole tribes in peaceful garb, old men, women and children, wrapped in blankets and shod in moccasins that gave no sound as they pressed up the incline to the camp. That was not the worst of it. The redskins were bringing with them all their friends of earth and air!

I have often been impressed by pictures of old Noah leading all the animals up into the ark, and never could quite understand how it was all managed, from mastodons to microbes. I had also seen pictures of impossible herds of buffalo roaming the western plains; so I had a fairly adequate idea of how large bodies of quadrupeds would look, but, along with all the Indians that ever lived in North America, by which our camp was now hopelessly surrounded, were massed more beasts than I had ever supposed existed in all the continents combined!

Bison by the acre! Bears—grizzly, brown and black—by the billion! Wild

cats without number! Wolves of the forest and wolves of the prairie! Beavers, badgers, raccoons, porcupines! Deer, red, white and spotted, in droves unheard of; and squirrels and rabbits! Trillions! And listen!

Suddenly the whir of ten hundred thousand wings. The sky was one black mass of feathered things—all circling overhead above the doomed camp. The stars could not be seen because of the aerial mass; not even the great planet that had hung so gorgeously upon the eastern horizon. Every kind of land and water fowl of which anyone had ever heard or dreamed—and more—was crowding, calling, screaming, settling lower and lower towards the forest, field and river, with the camp, our poor little unprotected camp, as the evident center of their interest. I knew that great Bald eagles had been known to carry children off in their terrible talons, just as fishhawks fly away with

their bleeding victims, snatched from shallow waters. And those horrible vultures! And big, black turkey buzzards!

How long had this gathering of all the wild creatures of the earth and sky to be endured? How long was it to be before they claimed their easy prey? Only a matter of minutes surely. Why had we ever tried to tempt the spirits of the wilderness of which the whites now had possession? Why had we not been satisfied with just imagining, or watching from the safe shelter of our own dooryards or the pastures near the old red barn, within easy running distance of the house? Fools that we were! We might have known better than to walk deliberately into such a trap. I knew now just how that woodchuck felt the other day when I went to get him out of the snare I had set for him. He stood just as much chance of getting away alive as I did here in the center of this awful aggregation,

bent clearly upon my own destruction. These and a thousand other self-accusing thoughts flashed through my brain as I felt the end coming closer, ever closer!

After the lapse of a near-eternity, I became conscious of the fact that someone was speaking, and a great hush came over the assembling multitudes. The Star of Morning still glowed in golden splendor, and, just as the first faint signs of approaching dawn were becoming visible to experienced eyes, an aged chieftain in the foremost rank of Red Men, stepping forward, prostrated himself towards the east. With uplifted arms, he began what seemed an invocation to some Higher Power, and, as he ceased, a great hymn of supplication rose and fell in swelling cadence through the stillness of the dying night.

The very air was vibrant with repressed excitement and expectation, and still my comrades slept on, all un-

conscious of the dramatic scene of which I was apparently the only outside witness. Again the voice:

"The star so hotly pressed by the rising sun already pales, and with him faint and fall we all. Before the Fire-God wakes we must be gone. Back to the far-off hills and dales from whence we came. Back to the crags and canyons, the marshes and the meadows of the Land that is not in Earth nor Air nor Sky! Land that is neither substance nor yet shadow! Land unseen! Unknown to all save we alone! Haste! For the Morning breaks!"

I had no means, of course, of knowing what this was all about, or what was to happen next, but I was sure that it was me they were after. I had long since lost the power of locomotion, and there was nothing to do but watch in white terror, and await the finish.

On signal from the chief, a group of

braves arose and disappeared noiselessly in the gloomy depths of the forest. The shrill barking of wolves or coyotes somewhere in the distance soon added little to my comfort. In fact, it required but a moment to comprehend that they were headed camp-ward. Louder and louder resounded the howling of the hungry pack, as they tore their savage way through thickets or open glades. They were being sent to eat me alive! There was no longer any doubt as to the finish! I tried to yell, but couldn't! Nearer and nearer came the snarling crew! I could plainly hear the snapping of dead twigs and the rattle of dry leaves that told of their close approach! And here they are! Gray wolves, white wolves, black wolves; big wolves, devilish-looking little wolves, and coyotes galore hard on their trail! I could see the staring, famished eyes, the sharp white fangs; and closed my eyes upon the furious furry avalanche!

And even as I then resigned myself to fate, I heard the voice again, and, suddenly, instead of ravening beasts at my throat, all was again silent as the grave. The pack had vanished!

A soft rustling as of wings in motion was now in evidence. No other sound was heard, save one of the boys turning drowsily in his morning sleep. I could sense, however, the certain approach of some being from the upper air; and presently in the dim distance I made out the on-coming flight of what looked like the figure of an Indian Princess, and as it drew nearer and nearer I saw that she was clad in shining, fluttering garments of Green and Gold; and even as I marveled at the fascinating apparition it glided gracefully into our very midst! Forthwith the ghostly tribes fell down and worshiped, and, while still prone in her presence, the Princess spoke:

"Children of the mountain and the plain! Children of the forests and the

dells! Know that I am Daughter of the Sun! Through the misty morning shadows He your prayer has heard, and answered. Hither has He sent me, and from hence I may not go. Naught that has once touched Earth can e'er return to starry realms till Heaven itself ordains! Whether I come to you and yours as curse or blessing know I not. But this one thing is certain as the rosy hue of Morn: I am here to live with you, for better or for worse, for good or for evil, to abide forever more, exchanging home ethereal on high, to plant my feet on this your solid Earth. Your women and your maidens shall attend upon me, and faithfully shall I reward. When fails the hunting, then shall I sustain and comfort thee."

Then all was still once more, and the wondrous picture of the night began rapidly to dissolve and fade far, far away. Next thing I knew a mighty conflagration was raging all around,

and familiar human voices fell again upon my ears. The morning sun was shining squarely in my sleepy eyes, and my companions of the camp were getting breakfast. That was all. I was awake.

As we passed the cornfield going home, I saw and understood. The Princess Green-and-Gold stood with her feet deep in the rich soft earth, and her arms were filled with plenty. At first a blessing to the Indian race, saving the villages through many a hard and cruel winter from the wolves of famine, the desire of white men to possess the rich lands over which she ruled became a primal factor in the final eviction of the savage tribes, and with them passed the myriad other creatures of the wild that came in dreams that Indian summer night to our little campfire in the woods, as I have told you.

XV

Winding the Clock

I HAVE no desire to interfere in the least with the business of our numerous makers of calendars and clocks, but, as a matter of fact, we could, if necessary, do without such things quite well. So far as the seasons are concerned, no one need tell you when summer is over or when winter approaches. Nature registers clearly enough not only the departure of the one, but the oncoming of the other. The sun might frequently mislead you if you had regard only for temperatures, but you have only to observe the roadsides or the fields by day, and the sky by night, to know what is happening. Many are too busy during

working hours to take note of what is being recorded by the migration of birds or the fruitions of trees and plants, and it must be admitted that those do not always tell the truth, astronomically speaking; but when the great but somewhat moody centre of our solar system sinks below the horizon there are "markers" that are absolutely dependeable. They may be consulted with perfect assurance. When red Antares hangs low in the southwest, when Arcturus approaches each evening nearer and nearer the wooded western hills, you do not need to be told that the days of the katydids and crickets are numbered. When Capella hangs out his great lantern in the far northeast and Aldebaran, with the Pleiades, comes up out of the eastern shadows, you may know to a certainty that it is time to order the coal, no matter what the thermometer may be telling you, and, observing these things, I know that we shall soon

be on our way back to the joys and the sorrows, the comedies and tragedies that make up life in High-Way Land.

I am not much of a believer in astrology. Still, it is interesting. I know little about it in any technical sense. I have never been especially concerned as to what the planets and constellations were doing on the September night of my own nativity. However, from an entry in the old family Bible I have been able to figure that Lyra was near the zenith. Lyra is of course the lyre of the Heavens, and the lyre is the symbol used by artists to indicate Music and Poesy. I confess that these have always made a great appeal to me, and Vega, who presides over that group of stars, blazing overhead with amazing purity of light, always seemed to me to stand for high and firmly-fixed ideals; and sometimes I try to "make believe" that she is the one particular celestial body to which my life-line was origi-

nally hitched. But how sadly have I failed to keep it taut!

I spoke in the beginning of our having been late this year in our annual migration to the country; and the times in general are so out of joint, everything in the business and financial world so "topsy-turvy," that we are compelled to go back to "the mill" earlier than usual, so it has been a comparatively short respite this time from the accustomed grind. The stellar clock that measures the length of our summer joys tells me it is time to go. How short has been the day! Let Robert Burns express it:

> "Our pleasures are as poppies spread,
> You seize the flower, its bloom is shed,
> Or, like a snowflake on the river,
> A moment white, then gone forever."

We all know that money has wings. That eagle on the minted gold is the right bird in the right place. Reputations, too, are but bubbles that burst sometimes when you least expect.

Love itself, which after all is the greatest thing in all the world, is always pictured by a Cupid equipped for flight. I take exception though to that. The idea is of Hellenic origin, developed and adopted by the Latin races. The passion-dominated peoples of Aegean and Mediterranean shores themselves supply historic instances of devotion that rose above ambition and even death itself. Hero and Leander, Juliet and her Romeo, Egypt and Mark Antony, Heloise and Abelard—a thousand such immortalized in song and story, in tragedy and Grand Opera, on canvas and in marble.

The French have a saying "L' amitie est l'amour sans ailes"—friendship is Love without wings; but I have an idea that the generally accepted concept is based upon the fact that in a very large number of instances that which leads to Gretna Green or the nearest licensing station is not real love at all. The genuine, lasting article

comes from we know not where. Probably from the skies; certainly not from earth. It asks only to serve and sacrifice, and in this is written all that is best and noblest in the passing of the generations. It is self-abasing, strong as the mid-day sun, tender, if need be, as the moonlight. It requires neither prompting nor directing. It knows but one course, and can go no other; and in its radiance even the humblest are glorified and exalted above the level of the beasts.

Speaking of Cupid and his alleged wings, of stars and constellations, I am reminded that I gave a Venus party about four o'clock one morning last July. That is to say, I invited anyone around the house who cared to come to join me in seeing a worth-while show in evidence this summer just before the dawn; but nobody came to view it with me.

I was not just sure as to what might happen to me if any of the neighbors

chanced to see me prowling around at that unreasonable hour. I knew that the party would not last more than ten or fifteen minutes anyhow, and, figuring upon going back to bed for a nice morning "snooze," I did not deem it necessary to get into starched linen, laced shoes and conventional garb, so, armed with my binoculars, I opened the front door as carefully as possible, and in closing it took special pains not to make a noise. I then tiptoed down the walk to the front gate, lest neighbor "Bill" on the one side or "Aleck" on the other hear my footsteps, see a bath-robed figure stealing out into the uncertain light prevailing at that hour, and think that they had "the drop" on some probably dangerous disturber of the peace; and the more I thought of the necessity for such a sneaking performance the madder I grew.

Why couldn't a perfectly sane, rational person, without the slightest thought of any unworthy purpose in

his mind, without any desire to rob a hen roost or commit a crime of any sort against anybody, get up at any hour he pleased, and walk boldly and man-fashion out through his own doorway, through his own lawn, through his own gate, at any hour of the day or night he saw fit, without having to play the part of a wretch outside the law? I was not accustomed to such tactics, and I did not like it; but I was going to see Venus, our nearest celestial neighbor, in one of her most brilliant moods, now at the nearest point in her orbit, at any cost to my pride and self-respect; so I went through with it.

I will not undertake any description of the golden crescent that was disclosed by the glasses in my hands. I saw what I set out to see, and got back to bed without being shot for a burglar, and that is something in this land of conventionalities! If any of the rest of you care to know how the planet carries her glory in this particular

position, with reference to the sun and earth, you can go through just what I had to do; watch for the opportunity in your astronomical almanacs, and find out for yourselves. But I cannot become reconciled to this inability to do the things that Nature clearly gives one the right to do without being suspected of being an outcast from society as organized. I am therefore prepared to say that Robinson Crusoe in his South Sea freedom tumbled into good fortune instead of trouble.

All day long the rain has been running steadily down the spouts hidden in the greenery of the walls. All day long I have heard the drip-drip-drip from the overhanging oaks. There is a hole in one of the gutters that will have to be repaired if all this sky-born water is to be saved; and through this crack a cataract in miniature is spattering about the base of the big mock-orange bush that shelters the doorway of the dining room, and threatening to

flood the area-way that leads down to the cellar where the coal bins, gas machine and heaters are waiting to supplement the open fire when frosty evenings come. These will soon be with us; I know the signs well enough. That little field mouse we caught in the trap yesterday may not be wise to the ways of women housekeepers, but he could tell you that summer days are almost over, and was looking forward to the time when snow and ice would make a meadow home uncomfortable for one so thinly clad.

Already we, too, are preparing to go, for now near the twentieth time. Probably there are snares well-baited set for us also in town. I know that when State Street merchants, at this stage of war liquidation, still ask $18 for a pair of shoes, profiteering is not a thing of the past, and that those who aspire to go along with the crowd may as well be prepared to put up their hands while their pockets are properly

turned inside out. And if you happen to be in need of furs—good night to the balance in the bank! Eskimos pay no such prices for skins, and Samoan women are not charged $350 each for dinner gowns. The more we spend of course the more we have to make. The more we make the more we spend. And there you are! The endless chain!

I cannot locate any coin out here in these hedges of mine. There are no certified checks to be culled in that bed of cannas. There is not a dollar in that dogwood, nor a penny in that petunia. There will probably not be copies enough of this altogether questionable comment sold to pay for the printing and binding of this book, so I am hurrying on now to a close. I have probably idled too long already. But, men and brethren, I have had nearly ninety days and nights with the best friend any man, woman or child can ever have, and I have gained something that is not going to be taken

from me right away when I get back to the mines in which all have to work. If you want the card, here it is, inscribed very simply: "Nature—address: any old place out-of-doors."

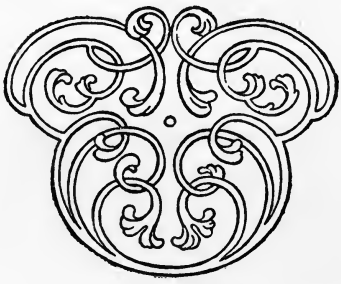
At sun-down last night I heard the plaint of plover, coming from somewhere across the open spaces. To-night I will have one final session with the fireplace, and tomorrow the last thing I shall do before we leave will be to wind up the old four-posted clock in the corner, just for luck. Then we will lock the doors, and head back to resume a place in the old world's work that may, or may not, be of more importance than walks and talks with birds and bees and butterflies and thistle-down. Who knows?

Farewell! Dear Dumbiedykes! A long farewell
To all thy joys!
Farewell to flowery glades and vine-clad walls!
Farewell to quiet shades and wildwood calls!
The sands have run.

Farewell! Dear Dumbiedykes! Again farewell!
I love thee still.
The rain upon the roof, the ingle nook,
The glow upon the hearth, the open book,
When clouds obscure the sun.

Farewell! Dear Dumbiedykes! A fond farewell!
The birds have flown,
And evening shadows falling fast
In darkness veil the radiant past.
The day is done.

Farewell! Dear Dumbiedykes! Still fare thee well!
The fire burns low.
I leave thee to thy dreams and memories sweet,
And visions fair of happiness complete!
The end has come.



XVI

High-Way Land

AND a wonderful land is High-Way Land
If only you understand!
You must first leave all dreams of the idle hours
With the fields and the forests and meadow flowers,
And cast all your pictures of sunsets and showers
To the four winds of Heaven, and look for the towers
That speak of the world and its harnessed powers,
When you enter High-Way Land.

It calls for your best, this High-Way Land,
It's no place for those who would shirk;

There is work to be done, and fights to be won,
If you hold your place in the grilling race
And will stand for the gaff and the killing pace,
And fall in your tracks, as fall you must,
While the crowd whirls by in a cloud of dust—
For that is the law of the High-Way Land.

Still it's not all bad land, this High-Way Land,
If you keep to the right and don't sell a good name
For the glittering baubles of gain and fame.
But the day will come when the road is hard,
When toil as you may the way is barred,
When torn by doubts, and o'erwhelmed by fears,

Your courage fails and you're near to tears,
As you struggle on through unfruitful years,
And you grope in the dark for a helping hand,—
The sun's shining somewhere in By-Way Land.

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