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# *American Sketchbook*



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TORONTO





Rockwell Kent Illustration for *Moby Dick*, through courtesy of R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company, Chicago

# AMERICAN SKETCHBOOK

*Collected by* ~~~~~  
TREMAINE McDOWELL  
WINFIELD H. ROGERS  
JOHN T. FLANAGAN  
HAROLD A. BLAINE

*New York*  
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY  
1938

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## ON JOURNEYS THROUGH THE STATES

*On journeys through the States we start  
(Ay, through the world—urged by these songs,  
Sailing henceforth to every land—to every sea;)  
We, willing learners of all, teachers of all, and lovers of all.  
We have watch'd the seasons dispensing themselves, and passing on,  
We have said, Why should not a man or woman do as much as the  
    seasons and effuse as much?  
We dwell a while in every city and town;  
We pass through Kanada, the North-east, the vast valley of the  
    Mississippi, and the Southern States;  
We confer on equal terms with each of The States,  
We make trial of ourselves and invite men and women to hear;  
We say to ourselves, Remember, fear not, be candid, promulge the  
    body and the Soul;  
Dwell a while and pass on. . . .*

WALT WHITMAN



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T. M.

# New England



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# New England Profiles

## 1. The Landlady's Daughter

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

What do *you* think of these verses, my friends?—Is that piece an impromptu? said my landlady's daughter. (*Aet.* 19+. Tender-eyed blonde. Long ringlets. Cameo pin. Gold pencil-case on a chain. Locket. Bracelet. Album. Autograph book. Accordeon. Reads Byron, Tupper, and Sylvanus Cobb, Junior, while her mother makes the puddings. Says "Yes?" when you tell her anything.)—*Oui et non, ma petite*,—Yes and no, my child. Five of the seven verses were written off-hand; the other two took a week,—that is, were hanging round the desk in a ragged, forlorn, unrhymed condition as long as that. . . .

"Yes?" said our landlady's daughter.

I did not address the following remark to her, and I trust, from her limited range of reading, she will never see it; I said it softly to my next neighbor.

When a young female wears a flat circular side-curl, gummed on each temple,—when she walks with a male, not arm in arm, but his arm against the back of hers,—and when she says "Yes?" with the note of interrogation, you are generally safe in asking her what wages she gets, and who the "feller" was you saw her with.

"What were you whispering?" said the daughter of the house, moistening her lips, as she spoke, in a very engaging manner.

"I was only laying down a principle of social diagnosis."

"Yes?"

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table, 1858*

## 2. The Woodchuck Cap

HENRY THOREAU

Passed a very little boy in the street to-day who had on a home-made cap of a woodchuck's skin, which his father or older brother had killed and cured and his mother or older sister had fashioned

into a nice warm cap. I was interested by the sight of it; it suggested so much of family history, adventure with the animal, story told about it, not without exaggeration, the human parents, care of their young these hard times. Johnny had been promised a cap many times, and now the work was completed. A perfect little Idyl, as they say. The cap was large and round, big enough, you would say, for the boy's father, and had some kind of cloth visor stitched to it. The top of the cap was evidently the back of the woodchuck, as it were, expanded in breadth, contracted in length, and it was as fresh and handsome as if the woodchuck wore it himself. The great gray-tipped hairs were all preserved and stood out above the brown ones, only a little more loosely than in life. As if he had put his head into the belly of a woodchuck, having cut off his tail and legs, and substituted a visor for the head. The little fellow wore it innocently enough, not knowing what he had on forsooth, going about his small business pit-a-pat, and his black eyes sparkled beneath it when I remarked on its warmth, even as the woodchuck's might have done. Such should be the history of every piece of clothing that we wear.

*Early Spring in Massachusetts, 1881*

### 3. Yankee Canaler

HENRY THOREAU

There were several canal-boats at Cromwell's Falls passing through the locks, for which we waited. In the forward part of one stood a brawny New Hampshire man, leaning on his pole, bareheaded and in shirt and trousers only, a rude Apollo of a man, coming down from that "vast uplandish country" to the main; of nameless age, with flaxen hair, and vigorous, weather-bleached countenance, in whose wrinkles the sun still lodged, as little touched by the heats and frosts and withering cares of life as a maple of the mountain; an undressed, unkempt, uncivil man, with whom we parleyed awhile and parted not without a sincere interest in one another. His humanity was genuine and instinctive, and his rudeness only a manner. He inquired, just as we were passing out of earshot, if we had killed anything, and we shouted after him that we had shot a *buoy*, and could see him for a long while scratching his head in vain to know if he had heard aright.

*A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, 1849*

## 4. A Cape Cod Wrecker

HENRY THOREAU

We soon met one of these wreckers,—a regular Cape Cod man, with whom we parleyed, with a bleached and weatherbeaten face, within whose wrinkles I distinguished no particular feature. It was like an old sail endowed with life,—a hanging-cliff of weather-beaten flesh,—like one of the clay boulders which occurred in that sand-bank. He had on a hat which had seen salt water, and a coat of many pieces and colors, though it was mainly the color of the beach, as if it had been sanded. His variegated back—for his coat had many patches, even between the shoulders—was a rich study to us when we had passed him and looked round. It might have been dishonorable for him to have so many scars behind, it is true, if he had not had many more and more serious ones in front. He looked . . . too grave to laugh, too tough to cry; as indifferent as a clam,—like a sea-clam with hat on and legs, that was out walking the strand. He may have been one of the Pilgrims,—Peregrine White, at least—who has kept on the back side of the Cape, and let the centuries go by. He was looking for wrecks, old logs, water-logged and covered with barnacles, or bits of boards and joists, even chips which he drew out of the reach of the tide and stacked up to dry. When the log was too large to carry far, he cut it up where the last wave had left it, or rolling it a few feet, appropriated it by sticking two sticks into the ground crosswise above it. Some rotten trunk, which in Maine.cumbers the ground and is, perchance, thrown into the water on purpose, is here thus carefully picked up, split and dried, and husbanded. Before winter the wrecker painfully carries these things up the bank on his shoulders by a long diagonal slanting path made with a hoe in the sand, if there is no hollow at hand. You may see his hooked pike-staff always lying on the bank, ready for use. He is the true monarch of the beach, whose “right there is none to dispute,” and he is as much identified with it as a beach-bird.

*Cape Cod, 1865*

## 5. Captain Ahab

HERMAN MELVILLE

There seemed no sign of common bodily illness about him nor of the recovery from any. He looked like a man cut away from the stake, when the fire has overrunningly wasted all the limbs without consuming them, or taking away one particle from their compacted aged robustness. His whole high, broad form seemed made of solid bronze and shaped in an unalterable mould, like Cellini's cast of Perseus. Threading its way out from among his grey hairs and continuing right down one side of his tawny scorched face and neck, till it disappeared in his clothing, you saw a slender rod-like mark, lividly whitish. It resembled that perpendicular seam sometimes made in the straight, lofty trunk of a great tree, when the upper lightning tearingly darts down it. . . .

So powerfully did the whole grim aspect of Ahab affect me, and the livid brand which streaked it, that for the first few moments I hardly noted that not a little of this overbearing grimness was owing to the barbaric white leg upon which he partly stood. It had previously come to me that this ivory leg had at sea been fashioned from the polished bone of the sperm whale's jaw. "Aye, he was dismasted off Japan," said the old Gay-Head Indian once; "but like his dismasted craft, he shipped another mast without coming home for it. He has a quiver of 'em."

I was struck with the singular posture he maintained. Upon each side of the *Pequod's* quarter-deck and pretty close to the mizzen shrouds, there was an auger hole, bored about half an inch or so into the plank. His bone leg steadied in that hole, one arm elevated, and holding by a shroud, Captain Ahab stood erect, looking straight out beyond the ship's ever-pitching prow. There was an infinity of firmest fortitude, a determinate, unsunderable wilfulness, in the fixed and fearless, forward dedication of that glance. Not a word he spoke; nor did his officers say aught to him, though by all their minutest gestures and expressions, they plainly showed the uneasy, if not painful, consciousness of being under a troubled master-eye. And not only that, but moody, stricken Ahab stood before them with an apparently eternal anguish in his face, in all the nameless, regal, overbearing dignity of some mighty woe.

*Moby Dick*, 1851

## 6. Thaddeus Stevens

PHOEBE CARY

An eye with the piercing eagle's fire,  
Not the look of the gentle dove;  
Not his the form that men admire,  
Nor the face that tender women love.

Working first for his daily bread  
With the humblest toilers of the earth;  
Never walking with free, proud tread—  
Crippled and halting from his birth.

Wearing outside a thorny suit  
Of sharp, sarcastic, stinging power;  
Sweet at the core as sweetest fruit,  
Or inmost heart of fragrant flower.

Fierce and trenchant, the haughty foe  
Felt his words like a sword of flame;  
But to the humble, poor, and low  
Soft as a woman's his accents came.

Not his the closest, tenderest friend—  
No children blessed his lonely way;  
But down in his heart until the end  
The tender dream of his boyhood lay.

His mother's faith he held not fast;  
But he loved her living, mourned her dead,  
And he kept her memory to the last  
As green as the sod above her bed.

He held as sacred in his home  
Whatever things she wrought or planned,  
And never suffered change to come  
To the work of her "industrious hand."

For her who pillowed first his head  
He heaped with a wealth of flowers the grave,  
While he chose to sleep in an unmarked bed,  
By his Master's humblest poor—the slave!

Suppose he swerved from the straightest course—  
That the things he should not do he did—  
That he hid from the eyes of mortals, close,  
Such sins as you and I have hid?

*Poems of Faith, Hope, and Love, 1874*

## 7. Wendell Phillips

AMOS BRONSON ALCOTT

People's Attorney, servant of the Right!  
Pleader for all shades of the solar ray,  
Complexions dusky, yellow, red, or white;  
Who, in thy country's and thy time's despite,  
Hast only questioned, What will Duty say?  
And followed swiftly in her narrow way:  
Tipped is thy tongue with golden eloquence,  
All honeyed accents fall from off thy lips,—  
Each eager listener his full measure sips,  
Yet runs to waste the sparkling opulence,—  
The scorn of bigots, and the worldling's flout,  
If Time long held thy merit in suspense,  
Hastening, repentant now, with pen devout,  
Impartial History dare not leave thee out.

*Sonnets and Canzonets, 1882*

## 8. Miss Asphyxia Smith

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

Miss Asphyxia was tall and spare. Nature had made her, as she often remarked of herself, entirely for use. She had allowed for her muscles no cushioned repose of fat, no redundant smoothness of outline. There was nothing to her but good, strong, solid bone, and tough, wiry, well-strung muscle. She was past fifty, and her hair was already well streaked with gray and so thin that, when tightly combed and tied, it still showed bald cracks, not very sightly to the eye.

The only thought that Miss Asphyxia ever had had in relation to the *coiffure* of her hair was that it was to be got out of her way. Hair she considered principally as something that might get into people's eyes, if not properly attended to; and accordingly, at a very early hour every morning, she tied all hers in a very tight knot and then secured it by a horn comb on the top of her head. To tie this knot so tightly that, once done, it should last all day, was Miss Asphyxia's only art of the toilet, and she tried her work every morning by giving her head a shake, before she left her looking-glass, not unlike that of an unruly cow. If this process did not start the horn comb from its moorings, Miss Asphyxia was well pleased. For the rest, her face was dusky and wilted,—guarded by gaunt, high cheek-bones, and watched over by a pair of small gray eyes of unsleeping vigilance. The shaggy eyebrows that overhung them were grizzled, like her hair.

*Oldtown Folks, 1869*

## 9. Miss Mehitabel Rossiter

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

Next came the pew of Miss Mehitabel Rossiter, who, in right of being the only surviving member of the family of the former minister, was looked upon with reverence in Oldtown and took rank decidedly in the Upper House, although a very restricted and limited income was expressed in the quality of her attire. Her Sunday suit in every article spoke of ages past, rather than of the present hour. Her laces were darned, though still they were laces; her satin gown had been turned and made over, till every possible capability of it was exhausted; and her one Sunday bonnet exhibited a power of coming out in fresh forms, with each revolving season, that was quite remarkable, particularly as each change was somewhat odder than the last. But still, as everybody knew that it was Miss Mehitabel Rossiter and no meaner person, her queer bonnets and dyed gowns were accepted as a part of those inexplicable dispensations of the Providence that watches over the higher classes, which are to be received by faith alone.

*Oldtown Folks, 1869*

## 10. Thoreau

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

It was said of Plotinus that he was ashamed of his body, and 't is very likely he had good reason for it,—that his body was a bad servant and he had not skill in dealing with the material world, as happens often to men of abstract intellect. But Mr. Thoreau was equipped with a most adapted and serviceable body. He was of short stature, firmly built, of light complexion, with strong, serious blue eyes, and a grave aspect,—his face covered in the late years with a becoming beard. His senses were acute, his frame well-knit and hardy, his hands strong and skilful in the use of tools. And there was a wonderful fitness of body and mind. He could pace sixteen rods more accurately than another man could measure them with rod and chain. He could find his path in the woods at night, he said, better by his feet than his eyes. He could estimate the measure of a tree very well by his eye; he could estimate the weight of a calf or a pig, like a dealer. From a box containing a bushel or more of loose pencils, he could take up with his hands fast enough just a dozen pencils at every grasp. He was a good swimmer, runner, skater, boatman, and would probably outwalk most countrymen in a day's journey. And the relation of body to mind was still finer than we have indicated. He said he wanted every stride his legs made. The length of his walk uniformly made the length of his writing. If shut up in the house he did not write at all.

*Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1862

## 11. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

WILLIAM WETMORE STORY

A pure sweet spirit, generous and large  
Was thine, dear poet. Calm, unturbulent,  
Its course along Life's varying ways it went,  
Like some broad river on whose happy marge  
Are noble groves, lawns, towns—which takes the charge  
Of peaceful freights from inward regions sent  
For human use and help and heart's content,  
And bears Love's sunlit sails and Beauty's barge.

So brimming, deepening ever to the sea  
Through gloom and sun, reflecting inwardly  
The ever-changing heavens of day and night,  
Thy life flowed on, from all low passions free,  
Filled with high thoughts, charmed into Poesy  
To all the world a solace and delight.

*Poems, 1856*

## 12. James Russell Lowell

VAN WYCK BROOKS

Meanwhile, the son of another Cambridge worthy, James Russell Lowell, who lived at "Elmwood,"—his father's house, the last in Tory Row,—had also appeared as a man of letters. A little younger than Dana, he had similar traits, although he was tethered to Cambridge not by conscience but by an affection for the *genius loci*. With the same animal spirits and boyish charm, he loved the soil as Dana loved the sea. He felt the thrill of the earth under his feet and soaked in the sunshine like a melon. Short, muscular, stocky, and shaggy,—his friend William Page had painted him with long blond curls and a pointed beard, a black jacket and a lace collar, as if he were something more than a reader of Shakespeare,—he liked to think that his ear suggested a faun's. He had an air of the world, although he was rather self-conscious, even a little jaunty. He seemed to be pleased with himself and his early success, mercurial, impressionable, plastic; but under the romantic, susceptible surface there was something timid, hard and wooden that was to show in the grain at certain moments. There was a streak of jealousy in him, an irreducible *amour-propre*, an over-hasty zeal for "the niche and the laurel." He was much at ease in all the Zions, and there were those who even thought him shallow and found his self-confident air very provoking. In fact, he was exuberant and impulsive, and, if there was something wooden in him, there was also something rich and buoyant. His fancy was luxuriant. He was the cleverest young man in Cambridge, and even the most intelligent. He had the makings of a first-rate scholar. But his leading trait was a gift of pure enjoyment, whether of books or garden-flowers, walking, talking, smoking, drinking, reading, a gusto that was new in Brattle Street. He was a capital idler. He could lie on his back for days on end, dreaming in

the fragrant air or conning some Elizabethan poet. Moreover, he, like Dana, had his trances, every year, when June, from its southern ambush, "with one great gush of blossom stormed the world."

*The Flowering of New England, 1936*

## 13. The Camp Cook

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

Kinney was the cook. He had been over pretty nearly the whole uninhabitable globe, starting as a gaunt and awkward boy from the Maine woods and keeping until he came back to them in late middle-life the same gross and ridiculous optimism. He had been at sea, and shipwrecked on several islands in the Pacific; he had passed a rainy season at Panama, and a yellow-fever season at Vera Cruz, and had been carried far into the interior of Peru by a tidal wave during an earthquake season; he was in the Border Ruffian War of Kansas, and he clung to California till prosperity deserted her after the completion of the Pacific road. Wherever he went, he carried or found adversity; but, with a heart fed on the metaphysics of Horace Greeley, and buoyed up by a few wildly interpreted maxims of Emerson, he had always believed in other men, and their fitness for the terrestrial millennium, which was never more than ten days or ten miles off. It is not necessary to say that he had continued as poor as he began, and that he was never able to contribute to those railroads, mills, elevators, towns, and cities which were sure to be built, sir, sure to be built, wherever he went. When he came home at last to the woods, some hundreds of miles north of Equity, he found that some one had realized his early dream of a summer hotel on the shore of the beautiful lake there; and he unenviously settled down to admire the landlord's thrift, and to act as guide and cook for parties of young ladies and gentlemen who started from the hotel to camp in the woods. This brought him into the society of cultivated people, for which he had a real passion. He had always had a few thoughts rattling round in his skull, and he liked to make sure of them in talk with those who had enjoyed greater advantages than himself. He never begrudged them their luck; he simply and sweetly admired them; he made studies of their several characters, and was never tired of analyzing them to their advantage to the next summer's parties. Late in the fall, he went in, as it is called, with

a camp of loggers, among whom he rarely failed to find some remarkable men. But he confessed that he did not enjoy the steady three or four months in the winter woods with no coming out at all till spring; and he had been glad of this chance in a logging camp near Equity, in which he had been offered the cook's place by the owner who had tested his fare in the Northern woods the summer before. Its proximity to the village allowed him to loaf in upon civilization at least once a week, and he spent the greater part of his time at the Free Press office on publication day. He had always sought the society of newspaper men, and, wherever he could, he had given them his.

*A Modern Instance, 1881*

## 14. James Cardmaker

JAMES GOULD COZZENS

The old man procrastinated. He considered himself a genealogical authority, because the *Boston Transcript* had frequently published letters of his about Connecticut families on its Saturday page. The hobby gave him something to do, or a y to do, through the miserable tedium of dying. He took notes which he did not appear to recognize as the almost letterless scrawls his drooping hands made them. At least once Doctor Bull found him puzzling, in a bewilderment more grim, or even ghastly, than comic, over pages of books held upside down. Like his pendent wrists, his skin-covered face without flesh, his shoulders humped to his little round head, this confusion of aimless, vaguely human activity suggested one thing only. When you saw him shaking and shifting the book held upside down, you saw, too, what James Cardmaker—his notes in the *Transcript*, his historic house and name, his college-educated daughter, aside—really was. Not merely evolved from, or like an ape, Mr. Cardmaker was an ape. The only important dissimilarities would be his relative hairlessness and inefficient teeth.

*The Last Adam, 1933*

## 15. Mrs. Talbot

JAMES GOULD COZZENS

The figure huddled on the dusty boards in the corner against the splintered, cob-webbed manger made no move, so he went in. "What's the trouble, Mrs. Talbot?" he said. He drew her to her feet, and, compellingly, out into the better light. "That yours?" he asked, pointing to the knife, put down beside his bag. "You'd better not carry things like that around. You'll hurt yourself."

Her mouth, twisted as though she had bitten a lemon; her eyes, angry and injured under the tangle of hair imperfectly pinned up, smeared now with cobwebs, made her look like one of those fantastic, miserably sinister women whose surfeit of misfortunes might once have started the idea that she had some to spare, could visit them on others. An earlier New England, in social and religious self-defense, had sometimes felt that hanging such people was its disagreeable duty. To remove her cheaply and forever from human society no means existed but interring her in the ground. Now, at Middletown, the State of Connecticut had a tomb for incurable witches. Impersonally patient, the state provided for their disappearance with a certainty never reached by the haphazard methods of a magistrate or a crowd. One could hide from the rope or evade the hunters; the state's lethal process was old age and decay.

*The Last Adam, 1933*

# Yankee Incidents

## 1. The Courtin'

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

God makes sech nights, all white an' still  
Fur'z you can look or listen,  
Moonshine an' snow on field an' hill,  
All silence an' all glisten.

Zekle crep' up quite unbeknown  
An' peeked in thru' the winder,  
An' there sot Huldy all alone,  
'ith no one nigh to hender.

A fireplace filled the room's one side  
With half a cord o' wood in—  
There warn't no stoves (tell comfort died)  
To bake ye to a puddin'.

The wa'nut logs shot sparkles out  
Towards the pootiest, bless her,  
An' leetle flames danced all about  
The chiny on the dresser.

Agin the chimbley crook-necks hung,  
An' in amongst 'em rusted  
The ole queen's-arm thet gran'ther Young  
Fetched back f'om Concord busted.

The very room, coz she was in,  
Seemed warm f'om floor to ceilin',  
An' she looked full ez rosy agin  
Ez the apples she was peelin'.

'Twas kin' o' kingdom-come to look  
On sech a blessed cretur,  
A dogrose blushin' to a brook  
Ain't modester nor sweeter.

He was six foot o' man, A 1,  
Clear grit an' human natur'.  
None couldn't quicker pitch a ton  
Nor dror a furrer straighter.

He'd sparked it with full twenty gals,  
Hed squired 'em, danced 'em, druv 'em,  
Fust this one, an' then thet, by spells—  
All is, he couldn't love 'em.

But long o' her his veins 'ould run  
All crinkly like curled maple,  
The side she breshed felt full o' sun  
Ez a south slope in Ap'il.

She thought no v'ice hed sech a swing  
Ez hisn in the choir;  
My! when he made Ole Hunderd ring,  
She *knowed* the Lord was nigher.

An' she'd blush scarlit, right in prayer,  
When her new meetin'-bunnet  
Felt somehow thru' its crown a pair  
O' blue eyes sot upon it.

Thet night, I tell ye, she looked *some!*  
She seemed to 've gut a new soul,  
For she felt sartin-sure he'd come,  
Down to her very shoe-sole.

She heered a foot, an' knowed it tu,  
A-raspin' on the scraper,—  
All ways to once her feelins flew  
Like sparks in burnt-up paper.

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,  
Some doubtfle o' the sekle,  
His heart kep' goin' pity-pat,  
But hern went pity Zekle.

An' yit she gin her cheer a jerk  
Ez though she wished him furder,  
An' on her apples kep' to work,  
Parin' away like murder.

“You want to see my Pa, I s’pose?”  
“Wal . . . no . . . I come dasignin—’”  
“To see my Ma? She’s sprinklin’ clo’es  
Agin to-morrer’s i’nin’.”

To say why gals acts so or so,  
Or don’t, ’ould be persumin’;  
Mebby to mean *yes* an’ say *no*  
Comes nateral to women.

He stood a spell on one foot fust,  
Then stood a spell on t’other,  
An’ on which one he felt the wust  
He couldn’t ha’ told ye nuther.

Says he, “I’d better call agin;”  
Says she, “Think likely, Mister:”  
Thet last word pricked him like a pin,  
An’ . . . Wal, he up an’ kist her.

When Ma bimeby upon ’em slips,  
Huldy sot pale ez ashes,  
All kin’ o’ smily roun’ the lips  
An’ teary roun’ the lashes.

For she was jes’ the quiet kind  
Whose naturs never vary,  
Like streams that keep a summer mind  
Snowhid in Jenooary.

The blood clost roun’ her heart felt glued  
Too tight for all expressin’,  
Tell mother see how metters stood,  
An’ gin ’em both her blessin’.

Then her red come back like the tide  
Down to the Bay o’ Fundy,  
An’ all I know is they was cried  
In meetin’ come nex’ Sunday.

*Biglow Papers, Second Series, 1867*

## 2. The Dutchman and the Dog

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

We left our horse in the shed, and, entering the little unpainted bar-room, we heard a voice, in a strange, outlandish accent, exclaiming, "Diorama." It was an old man, with a full, gray-bearded countenance, and Mr. Leach exclaimed, "Ah, here's the old Dutchman again!" And he answered, "Yes, Captain, here's the old Dutchman,"—though, by the way, he is a German, and travels the country with this diorama in a wagon, and had recently been at South Adams, and was now returning from Saratoga Springs. We looked through the glass orifice of his machine, while he exhibited a succession of the very worst scratches and daubings that can be imagined,—worn out, too, and full of cracks and wrinkles, dimmed with tobacco smoke, and every other wise dilapidated. There were none in a later fashion than thirty years since, except some figures that had been cut from tailors' show-bills. There were views of cities and edifices in Europe, of Napoleon's battles and Nelson's sea-fights, in the midst of which would be seen a gigantic, brown, hairy hand (the Hand of Destiny) pointing at the principal points of the conflict, while the old Dutchman explained. He gave a good deal of dramatic effect to his descriptions, but his accent and intonation cannot be written. He seemed to take interest and pride in his exhibition; yet when the utter and ludicrous miserability thereof made us laugh, he joined in the joke very readily. When the last picture had been shown, he caused a country boor, who stood gaping beside the machine, to put his head within it, and thrust out his tongue. The head becoming gigantic, a singular effect was produced.

The old Dutchman's exhibition being over, a great dog, apparently an elderly dog, suddenly made himself the object of notice, evidently in rivalry of the Dutchman. He had seemed to be a good-natured, quiet kind of dog, offering his head to be patted by those who were kindly disposed towards him. This great, old dog, unexpectedly, and of his own motion, began to run round after his not very long tail with the utmost eagerness; and, catching hold of it, he growled furiously at it, and still continued to circle round, growling and snarling with increasing rage, as if one half of his body were at deadly enmity with the other. Faster and faster went he, round and roundabout, growing still fiercer, till at last he ceased in a state of utter exhaustion; but no sooner had his exhibition finished than he became the same, mild, quiet, sensible old dog as before; and no one

could have suspected him of such nonsense as getting enraged with his own tail. He was first taught this trick by attaching a bell to the end of his tail; but he now commences entirely of his own accord, and I really believe he feels vain at the attention he excites.

*American Note-Books*, 1868

### 3. Captain Nutter's Pipe

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

[Miss Abigail] had affected many changes in the Nutter House before I came there to live; but there was one thing against which she had long contended without being able to overcome. This was the Captain's pipe. On first taking command of the household, she had prohibited smoking in the sitting-room, where it had been the old gentleman's custom to take a whiff or two of the fragrant weed after meals. The edict went forth,—and so did the pipe. An excellent move, no doubt; but then the house was his, and if he saw fit to keep a tub of tobacco burning in the middle of the parlor floor, he had a perfect right to do so. However, he humored her in this as in other matters, and smoked by stealth, like a guilty creature, in the barn, or about the gardens. That was practicable in summer, but in winter the Captain was hard put to it. When he couldn't stand it longer, he retreated to his bedroom and barricaded the door. Such was the position of affairs at the time of which I write.

One morning, a few days after the great snow, as Miss Abigail was dusting the chronometer in the hall, she beheld Captain Nutter slowly descending the staircase, with a long clay pipe in his mouth. Miss Abigail could hardly credit her own eyes.

"Dan'el!" she gasped, retiring heavily on the hatrack.

The tone of reproach with which this word was uttered failed to produce the slightest effect on the Captain, who merely removed the pipe from his lips for an instant, and blew a cloud into the chilly air. The thermometer stood at two degrees below zero in our hall.

"Dan'el!" cried Miss Abigail, hysterically,—“Dan'el, don't come near me!” Whereupon she fainted away; for the smell of tobacco-smoke always made her deadly sick.

Kitty Collins rushed from the kitchen with a basin of water, and set to work bathing Miss Abigail's temples and chafing her hands. I thought my grandfather rather cruel, as he stood there with a

half-smile on his countenance, complacently watching Miss Abigail's sufferings. When she was "brought to," the Captain sat down beside her, and, with a lovely twinkle in his eye, said softly:—

"Abigail, my dear, *there wasn't any tobacco in that pipe!* It was a new pipe. I fetched it down for Tom to blow soap-bubbles with."

*The Story of a Bad Boy, 1868*

## 4. Sunday

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

It is Sunday morning. I should premise by saying that the deep gloom which has settled over everything set in like a heavy fog early on Saturday evening.

At seven o'clock my grandfather comes smilelessly down stairs. He is dressed in black, and looks as if he had lost all his friends during the night. Miss Abigail, also in black, looks as if she were prepared to bury them, and not indisposed to enjoy the ceremony. Even Kitty Collins has caught the contagious gloom, as I perceived when she brings in the coffee-urn,—a solemn and sculpturesque urn at any time, but monumental now,—and sets it down in front of Miss Abigail. Miss Abigail gazes at the urn as if it held the ashes of her ancestors, instead of a generous quantity of fine old Java coffee. The meal progresses in silence.

Our parlor is by no means thrown open every day. It is open this June morning, and is pervaded by a strong smell of centre-table. The furniture of the room, and the little China ornaments on the mantelpiece, have a constrained, unfamiliar look. My grandfather sits in a mahogany chair, reading a large Bible covered with green baize. Miss Abigail occupies one end of the sofa, and has her hands crossed stiffly in her lap. I sit in the corner, crushed. Robinson Crusoe and Gil Blas are in close confinement. Baron Trenck, who managed to escape from the fortress of Glatz, can't for the life of him get out of our sitting-room closet. Even the Rivermouth Barnacle is suppressed until Monday. Genial converse, harmless books, smiles, lightsome hearts, all are banished. If I want to read anything, I can read Baxter's Saints' Rest. I would die first. So I sit there kicking my heels, thinking about New Orleans, and watching a morbid blue-bottle fly that attempts to commit suicide by butting his head against the window pane. Listen!—no, yes,—it is—it is the robins singing

in the garden,—the grateful, joyous robins singing away like mad, just as if it wasn't Sunday. Their audacity tickles me.

My grandfather looks up, and inquires in a sepulchral voice if I am ready for Sabbath school. It is time to go. I like the Sabbath school; there are bright young faces *there*, at all events. When I get out into the sunshine alone, I draw a long breath; I would turn a somersault up against Neighbor Penhallow's newly painted fence if I hadn't my best trousers on, so glad am I to escape from the oppressive atmosphere of the Nutter House.

Sabbath school over, I go to meeting, joining my grandfather, who doesn't appear to be any relation to me this day, and Miss Abigail, in the porch. Our minister holds out very little hope to any of us of being saved. Convinced that I am a lost creature, in common with the human family, I return home behind my guardians at a snail's pace. We have a dead cold dinner. I saw it laid out yesterday.

There is a long interval between this repast and the second service, and a still longer interval between the beginning and the end of that service; for the Rev. Wibird Hawkins's sermons are none of the shortest, whatever else they may be.

After meeting, my grandfather and I take a walk. We visit—appropriately enough—a neighboring graveyard. I am by this time in a condition of mind to become a willing inmate of the place. The usual evening prayer-meeting is postponed for some reason. At half past eight I go to bed.

*The Story of a Bad Boy, 1868*

## 5. Teaching Latin to the Cows

CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER

Speaking of Latin reminds me that I once taught my cows Latin. I don't mean that I taught them to read it, for it is very difficult to teach a cow to read Latin or any of the dead languages,—a cow cares more for her cud than she does for all the classics put together. But if you begin early you can teach a cow, or a calf (if you can teach a calf anything, which I doubt), Latin as well as English. There were ten cows, which I had to escort to and from pasture night and morning. To these cows I gave the names of the Roman numerals, beginning with *Unus* and *Duo*, and going up to *Decem*. *Decem* was of course the biggest cow of the party, or at least she

was the ruler of the others, and had the place of honor in the stable and everywhere else. I admire cows, and especially the exactness with which they define their social position. In this case, Decem could "lick" Novem, and Novem could "lick" Octo, and so on down to Unus, who couldn't lick anybody, except her own calf. I suppose I ought to have called the weakest cow Una instead of Unus, considering her sex; but I didn't care much to teach the cows the declensions of adjectives, in which I was not very well up myself; and besides it would be of little use to a cow. People who devote themselves too severely to study of the classics are apt to become dried up; and you should never do anything to dry up a cow. Well, these ten cows knew their names after a while, at least they appeared to, and would take their places as I called them. At least, if Octo attempted to get before Novem in going through the bars (I have heard people speak of a "pair of bars" when there were six or eight of them), or into the stable, the matter of precedence was settled then and there, and once settled there was no dispute about it afterwards. Novem either put her horns into Octo's ribs, and Octo shambled to one side, or else the two locked horns and tried the game of push and gore until one gave up. Nothing is stricter than the etiquette of a party of cows.

*Being a Boy, 1877*

## 6. Mr. Flood's Party

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

Old Eben Flood, climbing alone one night  
Over the hill between the town below  
And the forsaken upland hermitage  
That held as much as he should ever know  
On earth again of home, paused warily.  
The road was his with not a native near;  
And Eben, having leisure, said aloud,  
For no man else in Tilbury Town to hear:

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have the harvest moon  
Again, and we may not have many more;  
The bird is on the wing, the poet says,  
And you and I have said it here before.

Drink to the bird." He raised up to the light  
The jug that he had gone so far to fill,  
And answered huskily: "Well, Mr. Flood,  
Since you propose it, I believe I will."

Alone, as if enduring to the end  
A valiant armor of scarred hopes outworn,  
He stood there in the middle of the road  
Like Roland's ghost winding a silent horn.  
Below him, in the town among the trees,  
Where friends of other days had honored him,  
A phantom salutation of the dead  
Rang thinly till old Eben's eyes were dim.

Then, as a mother lays her sleeping child  
Down tenderly, fearing it may awake,  
He set the jug down slowly at his feet  
With trembling care, knowing that most things break;  
And only when assured that on firm earth  
It stood, as the uncertain lives of men  
Assuredly did not, he paced away,  
And with his hand extended paused again:

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have not met like this  
In a long time; and many a change has come  
To both of us, I fear, since last it was  
We had a drop together. Welcome home!"  
Convivially returning with himself,  
Again he raised the jug up to the light;  
And with an acquiescent quaver said:  
"Well, Mr. Flood, if you insist, I might.

"Only a very little, Mr. Flood—  
For auld lang syne. No more, sir; that will do."  
So, for the time, apparently it did,  
And Eben evidently thought so too;  
For soon amid the silver loneliness  
Of night he lifted up his voice and sang,  
Secure, with only two moons listening,  
Until the whole harmonious landscape rang—

"For auld lang syne." The weary throat gave out,  
The last word wavered; and the song being done,

He raised again the jug regretfully  
And shook his head, and was again alone.  
There was not much that was ahead of him,  
And there was nothing in the town below—  
Where strangers would have shut the many doors  
That many friends had opened long ago.

*Avon's Harvest, 1921*

## 7. Massachusetts Execution

UPTON SINCLAIR

The executioner stood behind a screen in one corner, to the left of the death chair; he could look over the screen, and see when it was time for him to earn his money. Two guards stood by the door leading to the cell corridor, and when the warden signaled that all was ready, they stepped back to the first cell, and unlocked the door. Madeiros lay asleep—not setting much value upon his last moments. The guards awakened him, stood him on his feet, and led him, half dazed, into the execution chamber, closing the door behind them, out of kindness for the occupants of the other two cells.

The victim had on short gray trousers, with a slit cut up each leg, and a blue shirt with short sleeves, made especially for the occasion. He was seated in the chair, and as quickly as possible, the deputy warden and a guard buckled the straps which would hold his hands and feet immovable. The electrodes, from which the current was to enter the body, were fastened, one to each leg, and a third, the headpiece, covering the entire top of the head; they contained wet sponges, to afford perfect transmission.

They tied a bandage over the victim's eyes, and then stepped back; all was ready. It was the warden's part to signal with his hand to the executioner, who would then move a switch. Since this did the actual killing, the theory was that the executioner alone was responsible, and for carrying this heavy responsibility the Commonwealth paid him the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars for each of three motions of the hand—plus traveling expenses from his retreat in New York.

He made the first motion, and there was a whir of the current, and the body of Madeiros gave a sudden leap, which would have jerked it from the chair if it had not been that the straps were heavy.

Human flesh became of the rigidity of steel, and stayed that way for several minutes, with the current of nineteen hundred volts passing through it. A ghastly odor of burning hair spread through the death chamber.

The current was turned off, the body sank back limp into the chair, and the warden signed to the medical examiners, who stepped forward with their stethoscopes. At nine minutes and thirty-five seconds past midnight they pronounced the Wrentham bank robber dead, and the body was lifted from the chair and carried to one of three newly painted slabs hidden behind a screen in the death chamber. Nothing could exceed the sense of propriety of the great Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or the decency with which it prepared for the elimination of its enemies.

The door leading to the cells was opened again, and the two guards went in to the second cell. Nicola Sacco was not asleep, but waiting, to do his last duty as a revolutionist. He walked out between the guards; he entered the execution chamber, and looked about him at the row of solemn witnesses, the deputies, the chair, and the screen with the face peering over it. His own face was white and haggard, his lips set, his whole expression that of defiance. He walked directly to the chair and sat down; then, as the guards began to adjust the straps, he lifted himself slightly, raised his voice, and said, in what came as a shout in that still brick-walled chamber of death: "Viva l'anarchia!"

("You see!" said all Massachusetts, when they read about it with their morning coffee and codfish balls. "We told you so! We knew it all along!")

The guards paid no attention to any words. They went on with swift fingers, as if they feared that some one might come to stop them at the last moment. When they were through, and stepped back, Sacco opened his lips again, and the warden withheld the signal. "Farewell, my wife and children and all my friends!" Then, as the warden was in the act of lifting his hand: "Good evening, gentlemen. Farewell, Mother."

The cue was given, and the executioner moved the switch, and the body leaped so that it was like a blow against the straps. Twenty-one hundred volts was the executioner's estimate of what it would take to rid Massachusetts of this wiry peasant; the amperage was from seven to nine, and it was nineteen minutes and two seconds after midnight when the medical examiners pronounced the duty done. The body of Nicola Sacco was lifted from the chair, and carried behind the screen and laid upon the second slab.

Then for the third and last time the door into the cell corridor was opened, and the guards entered. Bartolomeo Vanzetti had sat upon his cot alone, knowing what was happening in the adjoining chamber, but it had not shaken his nerve; he had had seven years in which to work out his system of self-discipline. "This is our career and our triumph." He rose from his cot, and walked with firm steps, the guards holding him, one by each arm. When they entered the execution chamber, the guards released him, and he looked at them—men whom he had known for a long time, and whom he had taught to respect him, no longer to call him a wop. They were poor fellows, who maybe had wives and children to keep, and could not help what they were doing; so he turned to them first, as became a proletarian martyr. "Good-bye," he said to each, and held out his hand to each in turn, and shook their hands firmly.

Then he turned to Deputy Warden Hogsett, and took both his hands and wrung them. "Good-bye, I thank you for your courtesy to me." And then to the warden, a big towering figure. Vanzetti was quiet and at ease, as if he were welcoming visitors to his home. "Warden, I want to thank you for all that you have done for me." He held out his hand, and the warden took it.

("Jesus!" he said, to one of the reporters afterwards. "He shook my hand, and then I had to raise it to give the signal!")

Vanzetti walked to the chair and sat down. Then he spoke—words which he had made the subject of much thought. "I wish to tell you that I am innocent and never committed any crime, but sometimes some sin. I thank you for everything you have done for me. I am innocent of all crime, not only of this one, but of all. I am an innocent man."

The guards, well trained, went on with their work, paying no attention to eloquence. The electrodes were adjusted, the straps made fast. As a guard started to apply the bandage to Vanzetti's eyes, he spoke again; it was the question which Cornelia had asked him, and to which he had promised an answer. He gave it with all the world for an audience. "I wish to forgive some people for what they are now doing to me."

The guards stepped back, and the warden gave the signal; the executioner moved the switch, and the body of Bartolomeo Vanzetti leaped as the others had done. Nineteen hundred and fifty volts were estimated to be sufficient for this less robust person, a dreamer and a man of words rather than of action. Many, many words he had both spoken and written, but now no more. The current was turned

off, and the medical men made their examination, and at twenty-six minutes and fifty-five seconds past midnight they pronounced that the last spark of anarchism had been extinguished from the august Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The warden had a solemn formula to recite, but his voice almost failed him, and not all the witnesses heard the words: "Under the law I now pronounce you dead, the sentence of the court having been legally carried out."

The third body was laid on the slab, and the doors of the execution chamber were opened—it had grown very hot, with the many volts of electricity and the tense emotions of martyrs. Also, the odor of burned hair made one ill; the night breeze was very welcome. The guards and witnesses went outside, and wiped the sweat from their foreheads, and from the backs of their wilted collars. "Christ!" said the deputy warden. "Did you hear what he said? He forgave me! Now what do you make of that?"

*Boston, 1928*

# Leviathan in Casks

HERMAN MELVILLE

## I. STUBB KILLS A WHALE

It was my turn to stand at the foremast-head; and with my shoulders leaning against the slackened royal shrouds, to and fro I idly swayed in what seemed an enchanted air. No resolution could withstand it; in that dreamy mood losing all consciousness, at last my soul went out of my body; though my body still continued to sway as a pendulum will, long after the power which first moved it is withdrawn.

Ere forgetfulness altogether came over me, I had noticed that the seamen at the main and mizen mast-heads were already drowsy. So that at last all three of us lifelessly swung from the spars, and for every swing that we made there was a nod from below from the slumbering helmsman. The waves, too, nodded their indolent crests; and across the wide trance of the sea, east nodded to west, and the sun over all.

Suddenly bubbles seemed bursting beneath my closed eyes; like vices my hands grasped the shrouds; some invisible, gracious agency preserved me; with a shock I came back to life. And lo! close under our lee, not forty fathoms off, a gigantic sperm whale lay rolling in the water like the capsized hull of a frigate, his broad, glossy back, of an Ethiopian hue, glistening in the sun's rays like a mirror. But lazily undulating in the trough of the sea, and ever and anon tranquilly spouting his vapory jet, the whale looked like a portly burgher smoking his pipe of a warm afternoon. But that pipe, poor whale, was thy last. As if struck by some enchanter's wand, the sleepy ship and every sleeper in it all at once started into wakefulness; and more than a score of voices from all parts of the vessel, simultaneously with the three notes from aloft, shouted forth the accustomed cry, as the great fish slowly and regularly spouted the sparkling brine into the air.

"Clear away the boats! Luff!" cried Ahab. And obeying his own order, he dashed the helm down before the helmsman could handle the spokes.

The sudden exclamations of the crew must have alarmed the whale; and ere the boats were down, majestically turning, he swam away to the leeward, but with such a steady tranquillity, and making

so few ripples as he swam, that thinking after all he might not as yet be alarmed, Ahab gave orders that not an oar should be used, and no man must speak but in whispers. So seated like Ontario Indians on the gunwales of the boats, we swiftly but silently paddled along, the calm not admitting of the noiseless sails being set. Presently, as we thus glided in chase, the monster perpendicularly flitted his tail forty feet into the air, and then sank out of sight like a tower swallowed up.

“There go flukes!” was the cry, an announcement immediately followed by Stubb’s producing his match and igniting his pipe, for now a respite was granted. After the full interval of his sounding had elapsed, the whale rose again, and being now in advance of the smoker’s boat, and much nearer to it than to any of the others, Stubb counted upon the honor of the capture. It was obvious, now, that the whale had at length become aware of his pursuers. All silence of cautiousness was therefore no longer of use. Paddles were dropped, and oars came loudly into play. And still puffing at his pipe, Stubb cheered on his crew to the assault.

Yes, a mighty change had come over the fish. All alive to his jeopardy, he was going “head out,” that part obliquely projecting from the mad yeast which he brewed.

“Start her, start her, my men! Don’t hurry yourselves; take plenty of time—but start her; start her like thunder-claps, that’s all,” cried Stubb, spluttering out the smoke as he spoke. “Start her, now; give ’em the long and strong stroke, Tashtego. Start her, Tash, my boy—start her, all; but keep cool—cucumbers is the word—easy, easy—only start her like grim death and grinning devils, and raise the buried dead perpendicular out of their graves boys—that’s all. Start her!”

“Woo-hoo! Wa-hee!” screamed the Gay-Header in reply, raising some old war-whoop to the skies, as every oarsman in the strained boat involuntarily bounced forward with the one tremendous leading stroke which the eager Indian gave.

But his wild screams were answered by others quite as wild. “Kee-hee! Kee-hee!” yelled Daggoo, straining forwards and backwards on his seat, like a pacing tiger in his cage.

“Ka-la! Koo-loo!” howled Queequeg, as if smacking his lips over a mouthful of Grenadier’s steak. And thus with oars and yells the keels cut the sea. Meanwhile, Stubb, retaining his place in the van, still encouraged his men to the onset, all the while puffing the smoke from his mouth. Like desperadoes they tugged and they strained, till the welcome cry was heard—“Stand up, Tashtego!—give it to him!” The harpoon was hurled. “Stern all!” The oarsmen backed

water; the same moment something went hot and hissing along every one of their wrists. It was the magical line. An instant before, Stubb had swiftly caught two additional turns with it round the loggerhead, whence, by reason of its increased rapid circlings, a hempen blue smoke now jetted up and mingled with the steady fumes from his pipe. As the line passed round and round the loggerhead; so also, just before reaching that point, it blisteringly passed through and through both of Stubb's hands, from which the handcloths, or squares of quilted canvas sometimes worn at these times, had accidentally dropped. It was like holding an enemy's sharp two-edged sword by the blade, and that enemy all the time striving to wrest it out of your clutch.

"Wet the line! wet the line!" cried Stubb to the tub oarsman (him seated by the tub) who, snatching off his hat, dashed the seawater into it. More turns were taken, so that the line began holding its place. The boat now flew through the boiling water like a shark all fins. Stubb and Tashtego here changed places—stem for stern—a staggering business truly in that rocking commotion.

From the vibrating line extending the entire length of the upper part of the boat, and from its now being more tight than a harp-string, you would have thought the craft had two keels—one cleaving the water, the other the air—as the boat churned on through both opposing elements at once. A continual cascade played at the bows, a ceaseless whirling eddy in her wake; and, at the slightest motion from within, even but of a little finger, the vibrating, cracking craft canted over her spasmodic gunwale into the sea. Thus they rushed, each man with might and main clinging to his seat, to prevent being tossed to the foam; and the tall form of Tashtego at the steering oar crouching almost double, in order to bring down his centre of gravity. Whole Atlantics and Pacifics seemed passed as they shot on their way, till at length the whale somewhat slackened his flight.

"Haul in—haul in!" cried Stubb to the bowsman, and, facing round towards the whale, all hands began pulling the boat up to him, while yet the boat was being towed on. Soon ranging up by his flank, Stubb, firmly planting his knee in the clumsy cleat, darted dart after dart into the flying fish, at the word of command, the boat alternately sterning out of the way of the whale's horrible wallow, and then ranging up for another fling.

The red tide now poured from all sides of the monster like brooks down a hill. His tormented body rolled not in brine but in blood, which bubbled and seethed for furlongs behind in their wake. The slanting sun playing upon this crimson pond in the sea, sent back

its reflection into every face, so that they all glowed to each other like red men. And all the while, jet after jet of white smoke was agonizingly shot from the spiracle of the whale, and vehement puff after puff from the mouth of the excited headsman, as at every dart, hauling in upon his crooked lance (by the line attached to it), Stubb straightened it again and again, by a few rapid blows against the gunwale, then again and again sent it into the whale.

“Pull up—pull up!” he now cried to the bowsman, as the waning whale relaxed in his wrath. “Pull up!—close to!” and the boat ranged along the fish’s flank. When reaching far over the bow, Stubb slowly churned his long sharp lance into the fish, and kept it there, carefully churning and churning, as if cautiously seeking to feel after some gold watch that the whale might have swallowed, and which he was fearful of breaking ere he could hook it out. But that gold watch he sought was the innermost life of the fish. And now it is struck; for, starting from his trance into that unspeakable thing called his “flurry,” the monster horribly wallowed in his blood, over-wrapped himself in impenetrable, mad, boiling spray, so that the imperilled craft, instantly dropping astern, had much ado blindly to struggle out from that phrensied twilight into the clear air of the day.

And now abating in his flurry, the whale once more rolled out into view; surging from side to side; spasmodically dilating and contracting his spout-hole, with sharp, cracking, agonized respirations. At last, gush after gush of clotted red gore, as if it had been the purple lees of red wine, shot into the frightened air; and falling back again, ran dripping down his motionless flanks into the sea. His heart had burst!

“He’s dead, Mr. Stubb,” said Daggoo.

“Yes; both pipes smoked out!” and withdrawing his own from his mouth, Stubb scattered the dead ashes over the water; and, for a moment, stood thoughtfully eyeing the vast corpse he had made.

## II. CUTTING IN

It was a Saturday night, and such a Sabbath as followed! Ex officio professors of Sabbath breaking are all whalers. The ivory Pequod was turned into what seemed a shamble; every sailor a butcher. You would have thought we were offering up ten thousand red oxen to the sea gods.

In the first place, the enormous cutting tackles, among other ponderous things comprising a cluster of blocks generally painted green, which no single man can possibly lift—this vast bunch of

grapes was swayed up to the main-top and firmly lashed to the lower mast-head, the strongest point anywhere above a ship's deck. The end of the hawser-like rope winding through these intricacies was then conducted to the windlass, and the huge lower block of the tackles was swung over the whale; to this block the great blubber hook, weighing some one hundred pounds, was attached. And now suspended in stages over the side, Starbuck and Stubb, the mates, armed with their long spades, began cutting a hole in the body for the insertion of the hook just above the nearest of the two side-fins. This done, a broad, semicircular line is cut round the hole; the hook is inserted; and the main body of the crew, striking up a wild chorus, now commence heaving in one dense crowd at the windlass. When, instantly, the entire ship careens over on her side; every bolt in her starts like the nailheads of an old house in frosty weather; she trembles, quivers, and nods her frightened mast-heads to the sky. More and more she leans over to the whale, while every gasping heave of the windlass is answered by a helping heave from the billows; at last, a swift, startling snap is heard; with a great swash the ship rolls upwards and backwards from the whale; and the triumphant tackle rises into sight dragging after it the disengaged semicircular end of the first strip of blubber. Now the blubber envelops the whale precisely as the rind does an orange, so it is stripped off from the body precisely as an orange is sometimes stripped by spiralizing it. For the strain constantly kept up by the windlass continually keeps the whale rolling over and over in the water, and the blubber in one strip uniformly peels off along the line called the "scarf," simultaneously cut by the spades of Starbuck and Stubb, the mates. And just as fast as it is thus peeled off, and indeed by that very act itself, it is all the time being hoisted higher and higher aloft till its upper end grazes the main-top. The men at the windlass then cease heaving, and for a moment or two the prodigious blood-dripping mass sways to and fro as if let down from the sky, and every one present must take good heed to dodge it when it swings, else it may box his ears and pitch him headlong overboard.

One of the attending harpooneers now advances with a long keen weapon called a boarding-sword, and watching his chance he dexterously slices out a considerable hole in the lower part of the swaying mass. Into this hole, the end of the second alternating great tackle is then hooked so as to retain a hold upon the blubber, in order to prepare for what follows. Whereupon, this accomplished swordsman, warning all hands to stand off, once more makes a

scientific dash at the mass, and with a few sidelong, desperate, lunging slicings, severs it completely in twain, so that while the short lower part is still fast, the long upper strip, called a blanket-piece, swings clear, and is all ready for lowering. The heavers forward now resume their song, and while the one tackle is peeling and hoisting a second strip from the whale, the other is slowly slackened away, and down goes the first strip through the main hatchway right beneath, into an unfurnished parlor called the blubber-room. Into this twilight apartment sundry nimble hands keep coiling away the long blanket-piece as if it were a great live mass of plaited serpents. And thus the work proceeds; the two tackles hoisting and lowering simultaneously, both whale and windlass heaving, the heavers singing, the blubber-room gentlemen coiling, the mates scarfing, the ship straining, and all hands swearing occasionally, by way of assuaging the general friction.

### III. THE FUNERAL

“Haul in the chains! Let the carcass go astern!”

The vast tackles have now done their duty. The peeled white body of the beheaded whale flashes like a marble sepulchre; though changed in hue, it has not perceptibly lost anything in bulk. It is still colossal. Slowly it floats more and more away, the water round it torn and splashed by the insatiate sharks, and the air above vexed with rapacious flights of screaming fowls, whose beaks are like so many insulting poniards in the whale. The vast white headless phantom floats further and further from the ship, and every rod that it so floats, what seem square roods of sharks and cubic roods of fowls augment the murderous din. For hours and hours from the almost stationary ship that hideous sight is seen. Beneath the unclouded and mild azure sky, upon the fair face of the pleasant sea, wafted by the joyous breezes, that great mass of death floats on and on, till lost in infinite perspectives.

There's a most doleful and most mocking funeral! The sea-vultures all in pious mourning, the air-sharks all punctiliously in black or speckled. In life but few of them would have helped the whale, I ween, if peradventure he had needed it; but upon the banquet of his funeral they most piously do pounce. Oh, horrible vulturism of earth! from which not the mightiest whale is free.

Nor is this the end. Desecrated as the body is, a vengeful ghost survives and hovers over it to scare. Espied by some timid man-of-war or blundering discovery-vessel from afar, when the distance obscuring the swarming fowls nevertheless still shows the white mass

floating in the sun and the white spray heaving high against it, straightway the whale's unharmed corpse, with trembling fingers is set down in the log—*shoals, rocks, and breakers hereabouts: beware!* And for years afterwards, perhaps, ships shun the place, leaping over it as silly sheep leap over a vacuum, because their leader originally leaped there when a stick was held. There's your law of precedents; there's your utility of traditions; there's the story of your obstinate survival of old beliefs never bottomed on the earth, and now not even hovering in the air! There's orthodoxy!

Thus, while in life the great whale's body may have been a real terror to his foes, in his death his ghost becomes a powerless panic to a world.

Are you a believer in ghosts, my friend? There are other ghosts than the Cock-Lane one, and far deeper men than Doctor Johnson who believe in them.

#### IV. THE TRY WORKS

Besides her hoisted boats, an American whaler is outwardly distinguished by her try-works. She presents the curious anomaly of the most solid masonry joining with oak and hemp in constituting the completed ship. It is as if from the open field a brick-kiln were transported to her planks.

The try-works are planted between the foremast and mainmast, the most roomy part of the deck. The timbers beneath are of a peculiar strength, fitted to sustain the weight of an almost solid mass of brick and mortar, some ten feet by eight square, and five in height. The foundation does not penetrate the deck, but the masonry is firmly secured to the surface by ponderous knees of iron bracing it on all sides and screwing it down to the timbers. On the flanks it is cased with wood, and at top completely covered by a large, sloping, battened hatchway. Removing this hatch we expose the great try-pots, two in number and each of several barrels' capacity. When not in use, they are kept remarkably clean. Sometimes they are polished with soapstone and sand till they shine within like silver punch-bowls. During the night-watches some cynical old sailors will crawl into them and coil themselves away there for a nap. While employed in polishing them—one man in each pot, side by side—many confidential communications are carried on, over the iron lips. It is a place also for profound mathematical meditation. It was in the left hand try-pot of the *Pequod*, with the soapstone diligently circling round me, that I was first indirectly struck by the remarkable fact that in geometry all bodies gliding along the cycloid, my soapstone

for example, will descend from any point in precisely the same time.

Removing the fire-board from the front of the try-works, the bare masonry of that side is exposed, penetrated by the two iron mouths of the furnaces directly underneath the pots. These mouths are fitted with heavy doors of iron. The intense heat of the fire is prevented from communicating itself to the deck by means of a shallow reservoir extending under the entire inclosed surface of the works. By a tunnel inserted at the rear, this reservoir is kept replenished with water as fast as it evaporates. There are no external chimneys; they open direct from the rear wall. And here let us go back for a moment.

It was about nine o'clock at night that the Pequod's try-works were first started on this present voyage. It belonged to Stubb to oversee the business.

"All ready there? Off hatch, then, and start her. You, cook, fire the works." This was an easy thing, for the carpenter had been thrusting his shavings into the furnace throughout the passage. Here be it said that in a whaling voyage the first fire in the try-works has to be fed for a time with wood. After that no wood is used, except as a means of quick ignition to the staple fuel. In a word, after being tried out, the crisp, shrivelled blubber, now called scraps or fritters, still contains considerable of its unctuous properties. These fritters feed the flames. Like a plethoric burning martyr or a self-consuming misanthrope, once ignited, the whale supplies his own fuel and burns by his own body. Would that he consumed his own smoke! for his smoke is horrible to inhale, and inhale it you must, and not only that, but you must live in it for the time. It has an unspeakable, wild, Hindoo odor about it, such as may lurk in the vicinity of funereal pyres. It smells like the left wing of the day of judgment; it is an argument for the pit.

By midnight the works were in full operation. We were clear from the carcass; sail had been made; the wind was freshening; the wild ocean darkness was intense. But that darkness was licked up by the fierce flames, which at intervals forked forth from the sooty flues and illuminated every lofty rope in the rigging, as with the famed Greek fire. The burning ship drove on, as if remorselessly commissioned to some vengeful deed. So the pitch and sulphur-freighted brigs of the bold Hydriote, Canaris, issuing from their midnight harbors, with broad sheets of flame for sails, bore down upon the Turkish frigates and folded them in conflagrations.

The hatch, removed from the top of the works, now afforded a wide hearth in front of them. Standing on this were the Tartarean shapes of the pagan harpooneers, always the whaleship's stokers.

With huge prolonged poles they pitched hissing masses of blubber into the scalding pots or stirred up the fires beneath, till the snaky flames darted, curling, out of the doors to catch them by the feet. The smoke rolled away in sullen heaps. To every pitch of the ship there was a pitch of the boiling oil, which seemed all eagerness to leap into their faces. Opposite the mouth of the works, on the further side of the wide wooden hearth, was the windlass. This served for a sea-sofa. Here lounged the watch, when not otherwise employed, looking into the red heat of the fire till their eyes felt scorched in their heads. Their tawny features, now all begrimed with smoke and sweat, their matted beards, and the contrasting barbaric brilliancy of their teeth—all these were strangely revealed in the capricious emblazonings of the works. As they narrated to each other their unholy adventures, their tales of terror told in words of mirth; as their uncivilized laughter forked upwards out of them, like the flames from the furnace; as to and fro, in their front, the harpooners wildly gesticulated with their huge pronged forks and dippers; as the wind howled on, and the sea leaped, and the ship groaned and dived, and yet steadfastly shot her red hell further and further into the blackness of the sea and the night, and scornfully champed the white bone in her mouth, and viciously spat round her on all sides; then the rushing Pequod, freighted with savages, and laden with fire, and burning a corpse, and plunging into that blackness of darkness, seemed the material counterpart of her monomaniac commander's soul.

#### V. STOWING DOWN AND CLEARING UP

While still warm, the oil, like hot punch, is received into the six-barrel casks. While, perhaps, the ship is pitching and rolling this way and that in the midnight sea, the enormous casks are slewed round and headed over, end for end, and sometimes perilously scoot across the slippery deck like so many land slides, till at last man-handled and stayed in their course; and all round the hoops, rap, rap, go as many hammers as can play upon them, for now, *ex officio*, every sailor is a cooper.

At length, when the last pint is casked and all is cool, then the great hatchways are unsealed, the bowels of the ship are thrown open, and down go the casks to their final rest in the sea. This done, the hatches are replaced and hermetically closed, like a closet walled up.

In the sperm fishery, this is perhaps one of the most remarkable incidents in all the business of whaling. One day the planks stream

with freshets of blood and oil; on the sacred quarter-deck enormous masses of the whale's head are profanely piled; great rusty casks lie about as in a brewery yard; the smoke from the try-works has besooted all the bulwarks; the mariners go about suffused with unctuousness; the entire ship seems great Leviathan himself; on all hands the din is deafening.

But a day or two after, you look about you and prick your ears in this self-same ship; and, were it not for the tell-tale boats and try-works, you would all but swear you trod some silent merchant vessel, with a most scrupulously neat commander. The unmanufactured sperm oil possesses a singularly cleansing virtue. This is the reason why the decks never look so white as just after what they call an affair of oil. Besides, from the ashes of the burned scraps of the whale, a potent lye is readily made; and whenever any adhesiveness from the back of the whale remains clinging to the side, that lye quickly exterminates it. Hands go diligently along the bulwarks and with buckets of water and rags restore them to their full tidiness. The soot is brushed from the lower rigging. All the numerous implements which have been in use are likewise faithfully cleansed and put away. The great hatch is scrubbed and placed upon the try-works, completely hiding the pots; every cask is out of sight; all tackles are coiled in unseen nooks; and when by the combined and simultaneous industry of almost the entire ship's company, the whole of this conscientious duty is at last concluded, then the crew themselves proceed to their own ablutions, shift themselves from top to toe, and finally issue to the immaculate deck, fresh and all aglow, as bridegrooms new-leaped from out the daintiest Holland.

Now, with elated step, they pace the planks in twos and threes, and humorously discourse of parlors, sofas, carpets, and fine cambrics, propose to mat the deck, think of having hangings to the top, object not to taking tea by moonlight on the piazza of the fore-castle. To hint to such musked mariners of oil, and bone, and blubber, were little short of audacity. They know not the thing you distantly allude to. Away, and bring us napkins!

But mark: aloft there, at the three mast heads, stand three men intent on spying out more whales, which, if caught, infallibly will again soil the old oaken furniture and drop at least one small grease-spot somewhere. Yes; and many is the time, when, after the severest uninterrupted labors which know no night, continuing straight through for ninety-six hours; when, from the boat where they have swelled their wrists with all day rowing on the Line, they

step to the deck only to carry vast chains, and heave the heavy windlass, and cut and slash, yea, and in their very sweatings to be smoked and burned anew by the combined fires of the equatorial sun and the equatorial try-works; when, on the heel of all this, they have finally bestirred themselves to cleanse the ship and make a spotless dairy room of it; many is the time the poor fellows, just buttoning the necks of their clean frocks, are startled by the cry of "There she blows!" and away they fly to fight another whale and go through the whole weary thing again. Oh! my friends, but this is man-killing! Yet this is life. For hardly have we mortals by long toilings extracted from this world's vast bulk its small but valuable sperm, and then, with weary patience, cleansed ourselves from its defilements, and learned to live here in clean tabernacles of the soul, hardly is this done, when—*There she blows!*—the ghost is spouted up, and away we sail to fight some other world and go through young life's old routine again.

*Moby Dick*, 1851

# Transcendental Wild Oats

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

On the first day of June, 184-, a large wagon drawn by a small horse and containing a motley load went lumbering over certain New England hills, with the pleasing accompaniments of wind, rain, and hail. A serene man with a serene child upon his knee was driving or rather being driven, for the small horse had it all his own way. A brown boy with a William Penn style of countenance sat beside him, firmly embracing a bust of Socrates. Behind them was an energetic-looking woman with a benevolent brow, satirical mouth, and eyes brimful of hope and courage. A baby reposed upon her lap, a mirror leaned against her knee, and a basket of provisions danced about at her feet, as she struggled with a large, unruly umbrella. Two blue-eyed little girls with hands full of childish treasures sat under one old shawl, chatting happily together.

In front of this lively party stalked a tall, sharp-featured man in a long blue cloak; and a fourth small girl trudged along beside him through the mud as if she rather enjoyed it.

The wind whistled over the bleak hills; the rain fell in a despondent drizzle; and twilight began to fall. But the calm man gazed as tranquilly into the fog as if he beheld a radiant bow of promise spanning the gray sky. The cheery woman tried to cover every one but herself with the big umbrella. The brown boy pillowed his head on the bald pate of Socrates and slumbered peacefully. The little girls sang lullabies to their dolls in soft, maternal murmurs. The sharp-nosed pedestrian marched steadily on, with the blue cloak streaming out behind him like a banner; and the lively infant splashed through the puddles with a duck-like satisfaction pleasant to behold.

Thus these modern pilgrims journeyed hopefully out of the old world, to found a new one in the wilderness. . . . This prospective Eden at present consisted of an old red farm-house, a dilapidated barn, many acres of meadow-land, and a grove. Ten ancient apple-trees were all the "chaste supply" which the place offered as yet; but, in the firm belief that plenteous orchards were soon to be evoked from their inner consciousness, these sanguine founders had christened their domain Fruitlands.

Here Charles Lane<sup>1</sup> intended to found a colony of latter day saints, who, under his patriarchal sway, should regenerate the world and glorify his name for ever. Here Bronson Alcott, with the devoutest faith in the high ideal which was to him a living truth, desired to plant a Paradise, where Beauty, Virtue, Justice, and Love might live happily together, without the possibility of a serpent entering in. And here his wife, unconverted but faithful to the end, hoped, after many wanderings over the face of the earth, to find rest for herself and a home for her children.

"There is our new abode," announced the enthusiast, smiling with a satisfaction quite undamped by the drops dripping from his hat-brim, as they turned at length into a cart-path that wound along a steep hillside into a barren-looking valley.

"A little difficult of access," observed his practical wife, as she endeavored to keep her various household gods from going overboard with every lurch of the laden ark.

"Like all good things. But those who earnestly desire and patiently seek will soon find us," placidly responded the philosopher from the mud, through which he was now endeavoring to pilot the much-enduring horse.

"Truth lies at the bottom of a well, Sister Abigail," said Brother Charles, pausing to detach his small comrade from a gate whereon she was perched for a clearer gaze into futurity.

"That's the reason we so seldom get at it, I suppose," replied Mrs. Alcott, making a vain clutch at the mirror, which a sudden jolt sent flying out of her hands.

"We want no false reflections here," said Charles with a grim smile, as he crunched the fragments under foot in his onward march.

Sister Abigail Alcott held her peace and looked wistfully through the mist at her promised home. The old red house with a hospitable glimmer at its windows cheered her eyes; and, considering the weather, was a fitter refuge than the sylvan bowers some of the more ardent souls might have preferred.

The new-comers were welcomed by one of the elect—a regenerate farmer, whose idea of reform consisted chiefly in wearing white cotton raiment and shoes of untanned leather. This costume, with a snowy beard, gave him a venerable and at the same time a somewhat bridal appearance.

The goods and chattels of the Society not having arrived, the weary family reposed before the fire on blocks of wood, while

<sup>1</sup> In the original text of this narrative, Miss Alcott gave fictitious names to the historical characters involved. Here the original names have been inserted.—*Editors.*

Brother Joseph Palmer regaled them with roasted potatoes, brown bread, and water, in two plates, a tin pan, and one mug, his table service being limited. But, having cast the forms and vanities of a depraved world behind them, the elders welcomed hardship with the enthusiasm of new pioneers, and the children heartily enjoyed this foretaste of what they believed was to be a sort of perpetual picnic.

During the progress of this frugal meal, two more brothers appeared. One was a dark, melancholy man, clad in homespun, whose peculiar mission was to turn his name hind part before and use as few words as possible. The other was a bland, bearded Englishman, who expected to be saved by eating uncooked food and going without clothes. He had not yet adopted the primitive costume, however, but contented himself with meditatively chewing dry beans out of a basket.

"Every meal should be a sacrament, and the vessels used should be beautiful and symbolical," observed Brother Alcott, mildly, righting the tin pan slipping about on his knees. "I priced a silver service when in town, but it was too costly; so I got some graceful cups and vases of Britannia ware."

"Hardest things in the world to keep bright. Will whiting be allowed in the community?" inquired Sister Abigail, with a housewife's interest in labor-saving institutions.

"Such trivial questions will be discussed at a more fitting time," answered Brother Charles sharply, as he burnt his fingers with a very hot potato. "Neither sugar, molasses, milk, butter, cheese, nor flesh are to be used among us, for nothing is to be admitted which has caused wrong or death to man or beast."

"Our garments are to be linen till we learn to raise our own cotton or some substitute for woollen fabrics," added Brother Bronson, blissfully basking in an imaginary future as warm and brilliant as the generous fire before him.

"Haou abaout shoes?" asked Brother Joseph, surveying his own with interest.

"We must yield that point till we can manufacture an innocent substitute for leather. Bark, wood, or some durable fabric will be invented in time. Meanwhile, those who desire to carry out our idea to the fullest extent can go barefooted," said Lane, who liked extreme measures.

"I never will, nor let my girls," murmured rebellious Sister Abigail, under her breath.

"Haou do you cattle'ate to treat the ten-acre lot? Ef things ain't

'tended to right smart, we shan't hev no crops," observed the practical patriarch in cotton.

"We shall spade it," replied Bronson, in such perfect good faith that Joseph said no more, though he indulged in a shake of the head as he glanced at hands that had held nothing heavier than a pen for years. He was a paternal old soul and regarded the younger men as promising boys on a new sort of lark.

"What shall we do for lamps, if we cannot use any animal substance? I do hope light of some sort is to be thrown upon the enterprise," said Mrs. Alcott with anxiety, for in those days kerosene and camphene were not, and gas unknown in the wilderness.

"We shall go without till we have discovered some vegetable oil or wax to serve us," replied Brother Charles, in a decided tone, which caused Sister Abigail to resolve that her private lamp should be always trimmed, if not burning.

"Each member is to perform the work for which experience, strength, and taste best fit him," continued Dictator Lane. "Thus drudgery and disorder will be avoided and harmony prevail. We shall rise at dawn, begin the day by bathing, followed by music, and then a chaste repast of fruit and bread. Each one finds congenial occupation till the meridian meal; when some deep-searching conversation gives rest to the body and development to the mind. Healthful labor again engages us till the last meal, when we assemble in social communion, prolonged till sunset, when we retire to sweet repose, ready for the next day's activity."

"What part of the work do you incline to yourself?" asked Sister Abigail, with a humorous glimmer in her keen eyes.

"I shall wait till it is made clear to me. Being in preference to doing is the great aim, and this comes to us rather by a resigned willingness than a wilful activity, which is a check to all divine growth," responded Brother Charles.

"I thought so." And Mrs. Alcott sighed audibly, for during the year he had spent in her family Brother Charles had so faithfully carried out his idea of "being, not doing," that she had found his "divine growth" both an expensive and unsatisfactory process. . . .

The furniture arrived next day, and was soon bestowed, for the principal property of the community consisted in books. To this rare library was devoted the best room in the house, and the few busts and pictures that still survived many flittings were added to beautify the sanctuary, for here the family was to meet for amusement, instruction, and worship.

Any housewife can imagine the emotions of Sister Abigail when she took possession of a large dilapidated kitchen, containing an old stove and the peculiar stores out of which food was to be evolved for her little family of eleven. Cakes of maple sugar, dried peas and beans, barley and hominy, meal of all sorts, potatoes, and dried fruit. No milk, butter, cheese, tea, or meat appeared. Even salt was considered a useless luxury and spice entirely forbidden by these lovers of Spartan simplicity. Her ten years' experience of vegetarian vagaries had been good training for this new freak, and her sense of the ludicrous supported her through many trying scenes.

Unleavened bread, porridge, and water for breakfast; bread, vegetables, and water for dinner; bread, fruit, and water for supper was the bill of fare ordained by the elders. No teapot profaned that sacred stove, no gory steak cried aloud for vengeance from her chaste gridiron; and only a brave woman's taste, time, and temper were sacrificed on that domestic altar.

The vexed question of light was settled by buying a quantity of bayberry wax for candles; and, [when it was discovered] that no one knew how to make them, pine knots were introduced, to be used when absolutely necessary. [As it was] summer, the evenings were not long, and the weary fraternity found it no great hardship to retire with the birds. The inner light was sufficient for most of them. But Mrs. Alcott rebelled. Evening was the only time she had to herself; and while the tired feet rested, the skilful hands mended torn frocks and little stockings, or the anxious heart forgot its burden in a book.

So mother's lamp burned steadily, while the philosophers built a new heaven and earth by moonlight; and through all the metaphysical mists and philanthropic pyrotechnics of that period Sister Abigail played her own little game of throwing light, and none but the moths were the worse for it.

Such farming probably was never seen before since Adam delved. The band of brothers began by spading garden and field; but a few days of it lessened their ardor amazingly. Blistered hands and aching backs suggested the expediency of permitting the use of cattle till the workers were better fitted for noble toil by a summer of the new life. . . .

The sowing was equally peculiar, for, owing to some mistake, the three brethren, who devoted themselves to this graceful task, found when about half through the job that each had been sowing a different sort of grain in the same field; a mistake which caused much perplexity, as it could not be remedied. But, after a long

consultation and a good deal of laughter, [they] decided to say nothing and see what would come of it.

The garden was planted with a generous supply of useful roots and herbs; but, as manure was not allowed to profane the virgin soil, few of these vegetable treasures ever came up. Purslane reigned supreme, and the disappointed planters ate it philosophically, deciding that Nature knew what was best for them and would generously supply their needs, if they could only learn to digest her "sallets" and wild roots.

The orchard was laid out, a little grafting done, new trees and vines set, regardless of the unfit season and entire ignorance of the husbandmen, who honestly believed that in the autumn they would reap a bounteous harvest.

Slowly things got into order and rapidly rumors of the new experiment went abroad, causing many strange spirits to flock thither, for in those days communities were the fashion and transcendentalism raged wildly. Some came to look on and laugh, some to be supported in poetic idleness, a few to believe sincerely and work heartily. Each member was allowed to mount his favorite hobby and ride it to his heart's content. Very queer were some of the riders, and very rampant some of the hobbies.

One youth, believing that language was of little consequence if the spirit was only right, startled new-comers by blandly greeting them with "Good-morning, damn you," and other remarks of an equally mixed order. A second irrepressible being held that all the emotions of the soul should be freely expressed, and illustrated his theory by antics that would have sent him to a lunatic asylum, if, as an unregenerate wag said, he were not already in one. When his spirit soared, he climbed trees and shouted; when doubt assailed him, he lay upon the floor and groaned lamentably. At joyful periods, he raced, leaped, and sang; when sad, he wept aloud; and when a great thought burst upon him in the watches of the night, he crowed like a jocund cockerel, to the great delight of the children and the great annoyance of the elders. One musical brother fiddled whenever so moved, sang sentimentally to the four little girls, and put a music-box on the wall when he hoed corn.

Brother Bower ground away at his uncooked food, or browsed over the farm on sorrel, mint, green fruit, and new vegetables. Occasionally he took his walks abroad, airily attired in an unbleached cotton *poncho*, which was the nearest approach to the primeval costume he was allowed to indulge in. At midsummer he retired to the wilderness, to try his plan where the woodchucks were without

prejudices and huckleberry-bushes were hospitably full. A sunstroke unfortunately spoilt his plan, and he returned to semi-civilization a sadder and wiser man.

Abram Everett preserved his Pythagorean silence, cultivated his fine dark locks, and worked like a beaver, setting an excellent example of brotherly love, justice, and fidelity by his upright life. He it was who helped overworked Sister Abigail with her heavy washes, kneaded the endless succession of batches of bread, watched over the children, and did the many tasks left undone by the brethren, who were so busy discussing and defining great duties that they forgot to perform the small ones.

Joseph Palmer placidly plodded about, "chorin' raound," as he called it, looking like an old-time patriarch with his silver hair and flowing beard, and saving the community from many a mishap by his thrift and Yankee shrewdness.

Brother Lane domineered over the whole concern, for, having put the most money into the speculation, he was resolved to make it pay—as if anything founded on an ideal basis could be expected to do so by any but enthusiasts.

Bronson Alcott simply revelled in the Newness, firmly believing that his dream was to be beautifully realized and in time not only little Fruitlands, but the whole earth, be turned into a Happy Valley. He worked with every muscle of his body, for *he* was in deadly earnest. He taught with his whole head and heart, planned and sacrificed, preached and prophesied, with a soul full of the purest aspirations, most unselfish purposes, and desires for a life devoted to God and man, too high and tender to bear the rough usage of this world. . . .

About the time the grain was ready to house, some call of the Oversoul wafted all the men away. An easterly storm was coming up and the yellow stacks were sure to be ruined. Then Sister Abigail gathered her forces. Three little girls, one boy (Charles' son), and herself, harnessed to clothes-baskets and Russia-linen sheets, were the only teams she could command; but with these poor appliances the indomitable woman got in the grain and saved food for her young, with the instinct and energy of a mother-bird with a brood of hungry nestlings to feed. . . .

With the first frosts, the butterflies, who had sunned themselves in the new light through the summer, took flight, leaving the few bees to see what honey they had stored for winter use. Precious little appeared beyond the satisfaction of a few months of holy living.

At first it seemed as if a chance to try holy dying also was to be offered them. Charles, much disgusted with the failure of the scheme, decided to retire to the Shakers, who seemed to be the only successful community going.

“What is to become of us?” asked Mrs. Abigail, for Bronson was heart-broken at the bursting of his lovely bubble.

“You can stay here, if you like, till a tenant is found. No more wood must be cut, however, and no more corn ground. All I have must be sold to pay the debts of the concern, as the responsibility rests with me,” was the cheering reply.

“Who is to pay us for what we have lost? I gave all I had—furniture, time, strength, six months of my children’s lives—and all are wasted. Bronson gave himself body and soul, and is almost wrecked by hard work and disappointment. Are we to have no return for this, but leave to starve and freeze in an old house, with winter at hand, no money, and hardly a friend left; for this wild scheme has alienated nearly all we had? You talk much about justice. Let us have a little, since there is nothing else left.”

But the woman’s appeal met with no reply but the old one: “It was an experiment. We all risked something, and must bear our losses as we can.”

With this cold comfort, Charles departed with his son and was absorbed into the Shaker brotherhood, where he soon found that the order of things was reversed and it was all work and no play.

Then the tragedy began for the forsaken little family. Desolation and despair fell upon Bronson. As his wife said, his new beliefs had alienated many friends. Some thought him mad, some unprincipled. Even the most kindly thought him a visionary, whom it was useless to help till he took more practical views of life. All stood aloof, saying: “Let him work out his own ideas, and see what they are worth.”

He had tried, but it was a failure. The world was not ready for Utopia yet, and those who attempted to found it [were] only . . . laughed at for their pains. In other days, men could sell all and give to the poor, lead lives devoted to holiness and high thought, and, after the persecution was over, find themselves honored as saints or martyrs. But in modern times these things are out of fashion. To live for one’s principles at all costs is a dangerous speculation; and the failure of an ideal, no matter how humane and noble, is harder for the world to forgive and forget than bank robbery or the grand swindles of corrupt politicians.

Deep waters now for Bronson, and for a time there seemed no

passage through. Strength and spirits were exhausted by hard work and too much thought. Courage failed when, looking about for help, he saw no sympathizing face, no hand outstretched to help him, no voice to say cheerily:

“We all make mistakes, and it takes many experiences to shape a life. Try again, and let us help you.”

Every door was closed, every eye averted, every heart cold, and no way open whereby he might earn bread for his children. His principles would not permit him to do many things that others did; and in the few fields where conscience would allow him to work, who would employ a man who had flown in the face of society, as he had done?

Then this dreamer, whose dream was the life of his life, resolved to carry out his idea to the bitter end. There seemed no place for him here—no work, no friend. To go begging conditions was as ignoble as to go begging money. Better perish of want than sell one’s soul for the sustenance of his body. Silently he lay down upon his bed, turned his face to the wall, and waited with pathetic patience for death to cut the knot which he could not untie. Days and nights went by, and neither food nor water passed his lips. Soul and body were dumbly struggling together, and no word of complaint betrayed what either suffered. . . . [Then at length his purpose altered, and he said:] “My faithful wife, my little girls—they have not forsaken me, they are mine by ties that none can break. What right have I to leave them alone? What right to escape from the burden and the sorrow I have helped to bring? This duty remains to me, and I must do it manfully. For their sakes, the world will forgive me in time; for their sakes, God will sustain me now.”

Too feeble to rise, Bronson groped for the food that always lay within his reach, and in the darkness and solitude of that memorable night ate and drank what was to him the bread and wine of a new communion, a new dedication of heart and life to the duties that were left him when the dreams fled.

In the early dawn, when that sad wife crept fearfully to see what change had come to the patient face on the pillow, she found it smiling at her, saw a wasted hand outstretched to her, and heard a feeble voice cry bravely, “Abigail!”

What passed in that little room is not to be recorded except in the hearts of those who suffered and endured much for love’s sake. Enough for us to know that soon the wan shadow of a man came forth, leaning on the arm that never failed him, to be welcomed

and cherished by the children, who never forgot the experiences of that time.

“Hope” was the watchword now; and, while the last logs blazed on the hearth, the last bread and apples covered the table, the new commander, with recovered courage, said to her husband—

“Leave all to God—and me. He has done his part, now I will do mine.”

“But we have no money, dear.”

“Yes, we have. I sold all we could spare and have enough to take us away from this snowbank.”

“Where can we go?”

“I have engaged four rooms at our good neighbor, Lovejoy’s. There we can live cheaply till spring. Then for new plans and a home of our own, please God.”

“But, Abigail, your little store won’t last long, and we have no friends.”

“I can sew and you can chop wood. Lovejoy offers you the same pay as he gives his other men; my old friend, Mrs. Truman, will send me all the work I want; and my blessed brother stands by us to the end. Cheer up, dear heart, for while there is work and love in the world we shall not suffer.”

“And while I have my good angel Abigail, I shall not despair, even if I wait another thirty years before I step beyond the circle of the sacred little world in which I still have a place to fill.”

So one bleak December day, with their few possessions piled on an ox-sled, the rosy children perched atop, and the parents trudging arm in arm behind, the exiles left their Eden and faced the world again.

“Ah, me! my happy dream. How much I leave behind that never can be mine again,” said Bronson, looking back at the lost Paradise, lying white and chill in its shroud of snow.

“Yes, dear; but how much we bring away,” answered brave-hearted Abigail, glancing from husband to children.

“Poor Fruitlands! The name was as great a failure as the rest!” continued Bronson with a sigh, as a frostbitten apple fell from a leafless bough at his feet.

But the sigh changed to a smile as his wife added, in a half-tender, half-satirical tone—

“Don’t you think Apple Slump would be a better name for it, dear?”

*Silver Pitchers, 1876*

# Mary Moody Emerson

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Mary Moody Emerson was born just before the outbreak of the Revolution. When introduced to Lafayette at Portland, she told him that she was "in arms" at the Concord Fight. Her father, the minister of Concord, a warm patriot in 1775, went as a chaplain to the American army at Ticonderoga; he carried his infant daughter, before he went, to his mother in Malden and told her to keep the child until he returned. He died at Rutland, Vermont, of army-fever, the next year; and Mary remained at Malden with her grandmother, and, after her death, with her father's sister, in whose house she grew up, rarely seeing her brothers and sisters in Concord. This aunt and her husband lived on a farm, were getting old, and the husband a shiftless, easy man. There was plenty of work for the little niece to do day by day, and not always bread enough in the house.

One of her tasks, it appears, was to watch for the approach of the deputy-sheriff, who might come to confiscate the spoons or arrest the uncle for debt. Later, another aunt, who had become insane, was brought hither to end her days. More and sadder work for this young girl. She had no companions, lived in entire solitude with these old people, very rarely cheered by short visits from her brothers and sisters. Her mother had married again,—married the minister who succeeded her husband in the parish at Concord [Dr. Ezra Ripley], and had now a young family growing up around her.

Her aunt became strongly attached to Mary, and persuaded the family to give the child up to her as a daughter, on some terms embracing a care of her future interests. She would leave the farm to her by will. This promise was kept; she came into possession of the property many years after; and her dealings with it gave her no small trouble, though they give much piquancy to her letters in after years. Finally it was sold, and its price invested in a share of a farm in Maine, where she lived as a boarder with her sister, for many years. It was in a picturesque country, within sight of the White Mountains, with a little lake in front at the foot of a high hill called Bear Mountain. Not far from the house was a brook running over a granite floor like the Franconia Flume, and noble

forests around. Every word she writes about this farm ("Elm Vale," Waterford), her dealings and vexations about it, her joys and raptures of religion and Nature, interest like a romance, and to those who may hereafter read her letters, will make its obscure acres amiable.

In Malden she lived through all her youth and early womanhood, with the habit of visiting the families of her brothers and sisters on any necessity of theirs. Her good will to serve in time of sickness or of pressure was known to them and promptly claimed, and her attachment to the youths and maidens growing up in those families was secure for any trait of talent or of character. Her sympathy for young people who pleased her was almost passionate and was sure to make her arrival in each house a holiday.

Her early reading was Milton, Young, Akenside, Samuel Clarke, Jonathan Edwards, and always the Bible. Later, Plato, Plotinus, Marcus Antoninus, Stewart, Coleridge, Cousin, Herder, Locke, Madame De Staël, Channing, Mackintosh, Byron. Nobody can read in her manuscript or recall the conversation of old-school people without seeing that Milton and Young had a religious authority, . . . and nowise the slight, merely entertaining quality of modern bards. And Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus—how venerable and organic as Nature they are in her mind! What a subject is her mind and life for the finest novel! When I read Dante the other day, . . . whom do you think I was reminded of? Whom but Mary Emerson and her eloquent theology? She had a deep sympathy with genius. When it was unhallowed, as in Byron, she had none the less, whilst she deplored and affected to denounce him. But she adored it when ennobled by character. She liked to notice that the greatest geniuses have died ignorant of their power and influence. She wished you to scorn to shine. "My opinion," she writes, (is) "that a mind like Byron's would never be satisfied with modern Unitarianism,—that the fiery depths of Calvinism, its high and mysterious elections to eternal bliss, beyond angels, and all its attendant wonders would have alone been fitted to fix his imagination." . . .

She delighted in success, in youth, in beauty, in genius, in manners. When she met a young person who interested her, she made herself acquainted and intimate with him or her at once by sympathy, by flattery, by raillery, by anecdotes, by wit, by rebuke, and stormed the castle. None but was attracted or piqued by her interest and wit and wide acquaintance with books and with eminent names. She said she gave herself full swing in these sudden intimacies, for she knew she should disgust [her new friends] soon, and resolved

to have their best hours. "Society is shrewd to detect those who do not belong to her train, and seldom wastes her attentions." She surprised, attracted, chided and denounced her companion by turns, and pretty rapid turns. But no intelligent youth or maiden could have once met her without remembering her with interest, and learning something of value. Scorn trifles, lift your aims; do what you are afraid to do; sublimity of character must come from sublimity of motive: these were the lessons which were urged with vivacity, in ever new language. But if her companion was dull, her impatience knew no bounds. She tired presently of dull conversations and asked to be read to, and so disposed of the visitor. If the voice or the reading tired her, she would ask the friend if he would do an errand for her, and so dismiss him. If her companion were a little ambitious and asked her opinions on books or matters on which she did not wish rude hands laid, she did not hesitate to stop the intruder with "How's your cat, Mrs. Tenner?" . . .

She had the misfortune of spinning with a greater velocity than any of the other tops. She would tear into the chaise or out of it, into the house or out of it, into the conversation, into the thought, into the character of the stranger—disdaining all the gradation by which her fellows time their steps. Though she might do very happily in a planet where others moved with the like velocity, she was offended here by the phlegm of all her fellow-creatures, and disgusted them by her impatience. She could keep step with no human being. Her nephew wrote of her: "I am glad the friendship with Aunt Mary is ripening. As by seeing a high tragedy, reading a true poem, or a novel like 'Corinne,' so, by society with her, one's mind is electrified and purged. She is no statute-book of practical commandments, nor orderly digest of any system of philosophy, divine or human, but a bible, miscellaneous in its parts, but one in its spirit, wherein are sentences of condemnation, promises and covenants of love that make foolish the wisdom of the world with the power of God."

Our Delphian was fantastic enough, Heaven knows, yet could always be tamed by large and sincere conversation. Was there thought or eloquence, she would listen like a child. Her aspiration and prayer would begin, and the whim and petulance in which by diseased habit she had grown to indulge without suspecting it was burned up in the glow of her pure and poetic spirit, which dearly loved the Infinite. . . .

When Mrs. Thoreau called on her one day, wearing pink ribbons, she shut her eyes, and so conversed with her for a time. By and by

she said, "Mrs. Thoreau, I don't know whether you have observed that my eyes are shut." "Yes, Madam, I have observed it." "Perhaps you would like to know the reasons?" "Yes, I should." "I don't like to see a person of your age guilty of such levity in her dress."

When her cherished favorite, E. H., was at the Vale, and had gone out to walk in the forest with Hannah, her niece, Aunt Mary feared they were lost, and found a man in the next house and begged him to go and look for them. The man went and returned saying that he could not find them. "Go and cry, 'Elizabeth!'" The man rather declined this service, as he did not know Miss H. She was highly offended, and exclaimed, "God has given you a voice that you might use it in the service of your fellow-creatures. Go instantly and call 'Elizabeth' till you find them." The man went immediately, and did as he was bid, and having found them apologized for calling thus, by telling what Miss Emerson had said to him.

When some ladies of my acquaintance by an unusual chance found themselves in her neighborhood and visited her, I told them that she was no whistle that every mouth could play on, but a quite clannish instrument, a pibroch, for example, from which none but a native Highlander could draw music.

In her solitude of twenty years, with fewest books and those only sermons, and a copy of "Paradise Lost" without covers or title-page, so that later, when she heard much of Milton and sought his work, she found it was her very book which she knew so well—she was driven to find Nature her companion and solace. She speaks of "her attempts in Malden, to wake up the soul amid the dreary scenes of monotonous Sabbaths, when Nature looked like a pulpit." . . .

For years she had her bed made in the form of a coffin; and delighted herself with the discovery of the figure of a coffin made every evening on their sidewalk, by the shadow of a church tower which adjoined the house. Saladin caused his shroud to be made and carried it to battle as his standard. She made up her shroud and, death still refusing to come, she, thinking it a pity to let [the garment] lie idle, wore it as a night-gown or a day-gown, nay, went out to ride in it on horseback in her mountain roads, until it was worn out. Then she had another made up, and as she never travelled without being provided for this dear and indispensable contingency, I believe she wore out a great many.

"1833. I have given up, the last year or two, the hope of dying. In the lowest ebb of health nothing is ominous; diet and exercise

restore. So it seems best to get that very humbling business of insurance. I enter my dear sixty the last of this month." "1835, June 16. Tedious indisposition;—hoped, as it took a new form, it would open the cool, sweet grave. Now existence itself in any form is sweet. Away with knowledge;—God alone. He communicates this our condition and humble waiting, or I should never perceive Him. Science, Nature,—O, I've yearned to open some page;—not now, too late. Ill health and nerves. O dear worms,—how they will at some sure time take down this tedious tabernacle, most valuable companions, instructors in the science of mind, by gnawing away the meshes which have chained it. A very Beatrice in showing the Paradise. Yes, I irk under contact with forms of depravity, while I am resigned to being nothing, never expect a palm, a laurel, hereafter." . . .

Her friends used to say to her, "I wish you joy of the worm." And when at last her release arrived, the event of her death had really such a comic tinge in the eyes of every one who knew her, that her friends feared they might not dare to look at each other at her funeral, lest they should forget the serious proprieties of the hour.

She gave high counsels. It was the privilege of certain boys to have this immeasurably high standard indicated to their childhood; a blessing which nothing else in education could supply. It is frivolous to ask—"And was she ever a Christian in practice?" Cassandra uttered, to a frivolous, skeptical time, the arcana of the Gods; but it is easy to believe that Cassandra domesticated in a lady's house would have proved a troublesome boarder. Is it the less desirable to have the lofty abstractions because the abstractionist is nervous and irritable? Shall we not keep Flamsteed and Herschel in the observatory, though it should even be proved that they neglected to rectify their own kitchen clock? It is essential to the safety of every mackerel fisher that latitudes and longitudes should be astronomically ascertained; and so every banker, shopkeeper, and wood-sawyer has a stake in the elevation of the moral code by saint and prophet. Very rightly, then, the Christian ages, proceeding on a grand instinct, have said: Faith alone, Faith alone.

*Atlantic Monthly*, December, 1881

# Mrs. Bonny

SARAH ORNE JEWETT

"Suppose we go down, now," said Mr. Lorimer, long before Kate and I had meant to propose such a thing; and our feeling was that of dismay. "I should like to take you to make a call with me. Did you ever hear of old Mrs. Bonny?"

"No," said we, and cheerfully gathered our wraps and baskets; and when Tommy finally came panting up the hill after we had begun to think that our shoutings and whistling were useless, we sent him down to the horses, and went down ourselves by another path. It led us a long distance through a grove of young beeches; the last year's whitish leaves lay thick on the ground, and the new leaves made so close a roof overhead that the light was strangely purple, as if it had come through a great church window of stained glass. After this we went through some hemlock growth, where, on the lower branches, the pale green of the new shoots and the dark green of the old made an exquisite contrast each to the other. Finally we came out at Mrs. Bonny's. Mr. Lorimer had told us something about her on the way down, saying in the first place that she was one of the queerest characters he knew. Her husband used to be a charcoal-burner and basket-maker, and she used to sell butter, and berries, and eggs, and choke-pears preserved in molasses. She always came down to Deephaven on a little black horse, with her goods in baskets and bags which were fastened to the saddle in a mysterious way. She had the reputation of not being a neat housekeeper, and none of the wise women of the town would touch her butter especially, so it was always a joke when she coaxed a new resident or a strange shipmaster into buying her wares; but the old woman always managed to jog home without the freight she had brought. "She must be very old, now," said Mr. Lorimer; "I have not seen her in a long time. It cannot be possible that her horse is still alive!" And we all laughed when we saw Mrs. Bonny's steed at a little distance, for the shaggy old creature was covered with mud, pine-needles, and dead leaves, with half the last year's burdock-burs in all Deephaven snarled into his mane and tail and sprinkled over his fur, which looked nearly as long as a buffalo's. He had hurt his leg, and his kind mistress had tied it up with a piece of faded red calico and an end of ragged rope. He gave us

a civil neigh, and looked at us curiously. Then an impertinent little yellow-and-white dog, with one ear standing up straight and the other drooping over, began to bark with all his might; but he retreated when he saw Kate's great dog, who was walking solemnly by her side and did not deign to notice him. Just now Mrs. Bonny appeared at the door of the house, shading her eyes with her hand, to see who was coming. "Landy!" said she, "if it ain't old Parson Lorimer! And who be these with ye?"

"This is Miss Kate Lancaster of Boston, Miss Katharine Brandon's niece, and her friend Miss Denis."

"Pleased to see ye," said the old woman; "walk in and lay off your things." And we followed her into the house. I wish you could have seen her: she wore a man's coat, cut off so that it made an odd short jacket, and a pair of men's boots much the worse for wear; also, some short skirts, beside two or three aprons, the inner one being a full-dress-apron, as she took off the outer ones and threw them into a corner; and on her head was a tight cap, with strings to tie under her chin. I thought it was a nightcap, and that she had forgotten to take it off, and dreaded her mortification if she should suddenly become conscious of it; but I need not have troubled myself, for while we were with her she pulled it on and tied it tighter, as if she considered it ornamental.

There were only two rooms in the house; we went into the kitchen, which was occupied by a flock of hens and one turkey. The latter was evidently undergoing a course of medical treatment behind the stove, and was allowed to stay with us, while the hens were remorselessly hustled out with a hemlock broom. They all congregated on the doorstep, apparently wishing to hear everything that was said.

"B'en up on the mountain?" asked our hostess. "Real sightly place. Goin' to be a master lot o' rosbries; get any down to the shore sence I quit comin'?"

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Lorimer, "but we miss seeing you."

"I s'pose so," said Mrs. Bonny, smoothing her apron complacently; "but I'm getting old, and I tell 'em I'm goin' to take my comfort; sence 'he' died I don't put myself out no great; I've got money enough to keep me long's I live. Beckett's folks goes down often, and I sends by them for what store stuff I want."

"How are you now?" asked the minister; "I think I heard you were ill in the spring."

"Stirrin', I'm obliged to ye. I wasn't laid up long, and I was so's I could get about most of the time. I've got the best bitters ye ever

see, good for the spring of the year. S'pose yer sister, Miss Lorimer, wouldn't like some? she used to be weakly lookin'." But her brother refused the offer, saying that she had not been so well for many years.

"Do you often get out to church nowadays, Mrs. Bonny? I believe Mr. Reid preaches in the school-house sometimes, down by the great ledge; doesn't he?"

"Well, yes, he does; but I don't know as I get much of any good. Parson Reid, he's a worthy creatur', but he never seems to have nothin' to say about foreordination and them p'int. Old Parson Padelford was the man! I used to set under his preachin' a good deal; I had an aunt living down to East Parish. He'd get worked up till he'd shut up the Bible and preach the hair off your head, 'long at the end of the sermon. Couldn't understand more nor a quarter part o' what he said," said Mrs. Bonny admiringly. "Well, we were a-speaking about the meeting over to the ledge; I don't know's I like them ledge people any to speak of. They had a great revival over there in the fall, and one Sunday I thought's how I'd go; and when I got there, who should be a-prayin' but old Ben Patey,—he always lays out to get converted,—and he kep' it up diligent till I couldn't stand it no longer; and by and by says he, 'I've been a wanderer;' and I up and says right out, 'Yes, you have, I'll back ye up on that, Ben; ye've wandered round my wood-lot and spoilt half the likely young oaks and ashes I've got, a-stealing your basket-stuff.' And the folks laughed out loud, and up he got and cleared. He's an awful old thief, and he's no idea of being anything else. I wa'n't a-goin' to set there and hear him makin' b'lieve to the Lord. If anybody's heart is in it, I ain't a-goin' to hender 'em; I'm a professor, and I ain't ashamed of it, week-days nor Sundays neither. I can't bear to see folks so pious to meeting, and cheat yer eye-teeth out Monday morning. Well, there! we ain't none of us perfect; even old Parson Moody was round-shouldered, they say."

"You were speaking of the Becketts just now," said Mr. Lorimer (after we had stopped laughing, and Mrs. Bonny had settled her big steel-bowed spectacles and sat looking at him with an expression of extreme wisdom. One might have ventured to call her "peart," I think). "How do they get on? I am seldom in this region nowadays, since Mr. Reid has taken it under his charge."

"They get along somehow or 'nother," replied Mrs. Bonny; "they've got the best farm this side of the ledge, but they're dreadful lazy and shiftless, them young folks. Old Mis' Hate-evil Beckett was tellin' me the other day—she that was Samantha Barnes, you know

—that one of the boys got fighting, the other side of the mountain, and come home with his nose broke and a piece o' one ear bit off. I forget which ear it was. Their mother is a real clever, willin' woman, and she takes it to heart, but it's no use for her to say anything. Mis' Hate-evil Beckett, says she, 'It does make my man feel dreadful to see his brother's folks carry on so.' 'But there,' says I, 'Mis' Beckett, it's just such things as we read of; Scriptur' is fulfilled: In the larter days there shall be disobedient children.' ”

This application of the text was too much for us, but Mrs. Bonny looked serious, and we did not like to laugh. Two or three of the exiled fowls had crept slyly in, dodging underneath our chairs, and had perched themselves behind the stove. They were long-legged, half-grown creatures, and just at this minute one rash young rooster made a manful attempt to crow. “Do tell!” said his mistress, who rose in great wrath; “you needn't be so forth-putting, as I knows on!” After this we were urged to stay and have some supper. Mrs. Bonny assured us she could pick a likely young hen in no time, fry her with a bit of pork, and get us up “a good meat tea;” but we had to disappoint her, as we had some distance to walk to the house where we had left our horses, and a long drive home.

Kate asked if she would be kind enough to lend us a tumbler (for ours was in the basket, which was given into Tommy's charge). We were thirsty, and wished to go back to the spring and get some water.

“Yes, dear,” said Mrs. Bonny, “I've got a glass, if it's so's I can find it.” And she pulled a chair under the little cupboard over the fireplace, mounted it, and opened the door. Several things fell out at her; and after taking a careful survey she went in, head and shoulders, until I thought that she would disappear altogether; but soon she came back, and reaching in took out one treasure after another, putting them on the mantelpiece or dropping them on the floor. There were some bunches of dried herbs, a tin horn, a lump of tallow in a broken plate, a folded newspaper, and an old boot, with a number of turkey-wings tied together, several vials, and a steel trap, and finally, such a tumbler! which she produced with triumph, before stepping down. She poured out of it on the table a mixture of old buttons and squash-seeds, beside a lump of beeswax which she said she had lost, and now pocketed with satisfaction. She wiped the tumbler on her apron and handed it to Kate; but we were not so thirsty as we had been, though we thanked her and

went down to the spring, coming back as soon as possible, for we could not lose a bit of the conversation.

There was a beautiful view from the doorstep, and we stopped a minute there. "Real sightly, ain't it?" said Mrs. Bonny. "But you ought to be here and look acrost the woods some morning just at sun-up. Why, the sky is all yaller and red, and them lowlands topped with fog! Yes, it's nice weather, good growin' weather, this week. Corn and all the rest of the trade looks first-rate. I call it a forrard season. It's just such weather as we read of, ain't it?"

"I don't remember where, just at this moment," said Mr. Lorimer.

"Why, in the almanac, bless ye!" said she, with a tone of pity in her grum voice; could it be possible he didn't know,—the Deep-haven minister!

We asked her to come and see us. She said she had always thought she'd get a chance some time to see Miss Katharine Brandon's house. She should be pleased to call, and she didn't know but she should be down to the shore before very long. She was 'shamed to look so shif'less that day, but she had some good clothes in a chist in the bedroom, and a boughten bonnet with a good cypress veil, which she had when "he" died. She calculated they would do, though they might be old-fashioned some. She seemed greatly pleased at Mr. Lorimer's having taken the trouble to come to see her. All those people had a great reverence for "the minister." We were urged to come again in "rosbry" time, which was near at hand, and she gave us messages for some of her old customers and acquaintances. "I believe some of those old creatur's will never die," said she; "why, they're getting to be ter'ble old, ain't they, Mr. Lorimer? There! ye've done me a sight of good, and I wish I could ha' found the Bible, to hear ye read a Psalm." When Mr. Lorimer shook hands with her, at leaving, she made him a most reverential courtesy. He was the greatest man she knew; and once during the call, when he was speaking of serious things in his simple, earnest way, she had so devout a look, and seemed so interested, that Kate and I, and Mr. Lorimer himself, caught a new, fresh meaning in the familiar words he spoke.

Living there in the lonely clearing, deep in the woods and far from any neighbor, she knew all the herbs and trees, and the harmless wild creatures who lived among them by heart; and she had an amazing store of tradition and superstition, which made her so entertaining to us that we went to see her many times before we came away in the autumn. We went with her to find some pitcher-plants one day, and it was wonderful how much she knew about

the woods, what keen observation she had. There was something so wild and unconventional about Mrs. Bonny that it was like taking an afternoon walk with a good-natured Indian. We used to carry her offerings of tobacco, for she was a great smoker, and advised us to try it ourselves if ever we should be troubled with nerves, or "narves," as she pronounced the name of that affliction.

*Deephaven, 1877*

# My Double and How He Undid Me

EDWARD EVERETT HALE

It is not often that I trouble the readers of the *Atlantic Monthly*. I should not trouble them now, but for the importunities of my wife, who "feels to insist" that a duty to society is unfulfilled till I have told why I had to have a double, and how he undid me. She is sure, she says, that intelligent persons cannot understand that pressure upon public servants which alone drives any man into the employment of a double. And while I fear she thinks, at the bottom of her heart, that my fortunes will never be remade, she has a faint hope that, as another *Rasselas*, I may teach a lesson to future publics, from which they may profit, though we die. Owing to the behavior of my double, or, if you please, to that public pressure which compelled me to employ him, I have plenty of leisure to write this communication.

I am, or rather was, a minister of the Sandemanian connection. I was settled in the active, wide-awake town of Naguadavick, on one of the finest water-powers in Maine. We used to call it a western town in the heart of the civilization of New England. A charming place it was and is. A spirited, brave young parish had I; and it seemed as if we might have all "the joy of eventful living" to our heart's content.

Alas! how little we knew on the day of my ordination, and in those halcyon moments of our first housekeeping. To be the confidential friend in a hundred families in the town,—cutting the social trifle, as my friend Haliburton says, "from the top of the whipped syllabub to the bottom of the sponge-cake, which is the foundation,"—to keep abreast of the thought of the age in one's study, and to do one's best on Sunday to interweave that thought with the active life of an active town, and to inspirit both and make both infinite by glimpses of the Eternal Glory, seemed such an exquisite forelook into one's life! Enough to do, and all so real and so grand! If this vision could only have lasted!

The truth is, that this vision was not in itself a delusion, nor, indeed, half bright enough. If one could only have been left to do his own business, the vision would have accomplished itself and brought out new paraheliacal visions, each as bright as the original. The misery was and is, as we found out, I and Polly, before long,

that besides the vision, and besides the usual human and finite failures in life (such as breaking the old pitcher that came over in the *Mayflower*, and putting into the fire the alpenstock with which her father climbed Mont Blanc)—besides these, I say (imitating the style of *Robinson Crusoe*), there were pitchforked in on us a great rowen-heap of humbugs, handed down from some unknown seed-time, in which we were expected, and I chiefly, to fulfil certain public functions before the community, of the character of those fulfilled by the third row of supernumeraries who stand behind the Sepoys in the spectacle of the “Cataract of the Ganges.” They were the duties, in a word, which one performs as member of one or another social class or subdivision, wholly distinct from what one does as A. by himself A. What invisible power put these functions on me it would be very hard to tell. But such power there was and is. And I had not been at work a year before I found I was living two lives, one real and one merely functional,—for two sets of people, one my parish, whom I loved, and the other a vague public, for whom I did not care two straws. All this was in a vague notion, which everybody had and has, that this second life would eventually bring out some great results, unknown at present, to somebody somewhere.

Crazed by this duality of life, I first read Dr. Wigan on the *Duality of the Brain*, hoping that I could train one side of my head to do these outside jobs, and the other to do my intimate and real duties. . . . But Dr. Wigan does not go into these niceties of this subject, and I failed. It was then that, on my wife’s suggestion, I resolved to look out for a double.

I was, at first, singularly successful. We happened to be recreating at Stafford Springs that summer. We rode out one day, for one of the relaxations of that watering-place, to the great Monson Poor-house. We were passing through one of the large halls, when my destiny was fulfilled! I saw my man!

He was not shaven. He had on no spectacles. He was dressed in a green baize roundabout and faded blue overalls, worn sadly at the knee. But I saw at once that he was of my height, five feet four and a half. He had black hair, worn off by his hat. So have and have not I. He stooped in walking. So do I. His hands were large, and mine. And—choicest gift of Fate in all—he had, not “a strawberry mark on his left arm,” but a cut from a juvenile brickbat over his right eye, slightly affecting the play of that eyebrow. Reader, so have I! My fate was sealed!

A word with Mr. Holley, one of the inspectors, settled the whole

thing. It proved that this Dennis Shea was a harmless, amiable fellow, of the class known as shiftless, who had sealed his fate by marrying a dumb wife, who was at that moment ironing in the laundry. Before I left Stafford I had hired both for five years. We had applied to Judge Pynchon, then the probate judge at Springfield, to change the name of Dennis Shea to Frederic Ingham. We had explained to the Judge what was the precise truth, that an eccentric gentleman wished to adopt Dennis, under this new name, into his family. It never occurred to him that Dennis might be more than fourteen years old. And thus, to shorten this preface, when we returned at night to my parsonage at Naguadavick, there entered Mrs. Ingham, her new dumb laundress, myself, who am Mr. Frederic Ingham, and my double, who was Mr. Frederic Ingham by as good right as I.

Oh, the fun we had the next morning in shaving his beard to my pattern, cutting his hair to match mine, and teaching him how to wear and how to take off gold-bowed spectacles! Really, they were electro-plate, and the glass was plain (for the poor fellow's eyes were excellent). Then in four successive afternoons I taught him four speeches. I had found these would be quite enough for the supernumerary-Sepoy line of life, and it was well for me they were; for though he was good-natured, he was very shiftless, and it was, as our national proverb says, like pulling teeth to teach him. But at the end of the next week he could say, with quite my easy and frisky air,—

1. "Very well, thank you. And you?" This for an answer to casual salutations.

2. "I am very glad you liked it."

3. "There has been so much said, and, on the whole, so well said, that I will not occupy the time."

4. "I agree, in general, with my friend the other side of the room."

At first I had a feeling that I was going to be at great cost for clothing him. But it proved, of course, at once, that, whenever he was out, I should be at home. And I went, during the bright period of his success, to so few of those awful pageants which require a black dress-coat and what the ungodly call, after Mr. Dickens, a white choker, that in the happy retreat of my own dressing-gowns and jackets my days went by as happily and cheaply as those of another Thalaba. And Polly declares there was never a year when the tailoring cost so little. He lived (Dennis, not Thalaba) in his

wife's room over the kitchen. He had orders never to show himself at that window. When he appeared in the front of the house I retired to my sanctissimum and my dressing-gown. In short, the Dutchman and his wife, in the old weather-box, had not less to do with each other than he and I. He made the furnace-fire and split the wood before daylight; then he went to sleep again, and slept late; then came for orders, with a red silk bandana tied round his head, with his overalls on, and his dresscoat and spectacles off. If we happened to be interrupted, no one guessed that he was Frederic Ingham as well as I; and, in the neighborhood, there grew up an impression that the minister's Irishman worked daytimes in the factory village at New Coventry. After I had given him his orders, I never saw him till the next day.

I launched him by sending him to a meeting of the Enlightenment Board. The Enlightenment Board consists of seventy-four members, of whom sixty-seven are necessary to form a quorum. . . . At this particular time we had had four successive meetings, averaging four hours each,—wholly occupied in whipping in a quorum. At the first only eleven men were present; at the next, by force of three circulars, twenty-seven; at the third, thanks to two days' canvassing by Auchmuty and myself, begging men to come, we had sixty. Half the others were in Europe. But without a quorum we could do nothing. All the rest of us waited grimly for our four hours, and adjourned without any action. At the fourth meeting we had flagged, and only got fifty-nine together. But on the first appearance of my double—whom I sent on this fatal Monday to the fifth meeting—he was the *sixty-seventh* man who entered the room. He was greeted with a storm of applause! The poor fellow had missed his way—read the street signs ill through his spectacles (very ill, in fact, without them)—and had not dared to inquire. He entered the room, finding the president and secretary holding to their chairs two judges of the Supreme Court, who were also members *ex officio* and were begging leave to go away. On his entrance all was changed. *Presto*, the by-laws were amended, and the western property was given away. Nobody stopped to converse with him. He voted, as I had charged him to do, in every instance, with the minority. I won new laurels as a man of sense, though a little unpunctual—and Dennis, *alias* Ingham, returned to the parsonage, astonished to see with how little wisdom the world is governed. He cut a few of my parishioners in the street; but he had his glasses off, and I am known to be near-sighted. Eventually he recognized them more readily than I.

I "set him again" at the exhibition of the New Coventry Academy; and here he undertook a "speaking part"—as, in my boyish, worldly days, I remember the bills used to say of Mlle. Celeste. We are all trustees of the New Coventry Academy; and there has lately been a good deal of feeling because the Sandemanians are leaning toward Free-Will, and that we have, therefore, neglected these semi-annual exhibitions, while there is no doubt that Auchmuty last year went to Commencement at Waterville. Now the head master at New Coventry is a real good fellow, who knows a Sanskrit root when he sees it, and often cracks etymologies with me; so that, in strictness, I ought to go to their exhibitions. But think, reader, of sitting through three long July days in that Academy chapel, following the program from

TUESDAY MORNING. *English Composition*. "SUNRISE." Miss Jones. round to—

*Trio on Three Pianos*. Duel from the Opera of "Midshipman Easy." *Marryat*,

coming in at nine, Thursday evening! Think of this, reader, for men who know the world is trying to go backward, and who would give their lives if they could help it on! Well! The double had succeeded so well at the Board, that I sent him to the Academy. (Shade of Plato, pardon!) He arrived early on Tuesday, when, indeed, few but mothers and clergymen are generally expected, and returned in the evening to us, covered with honors. He had dined at the right hand of the chairman, and he spoke in high terms of the repast. The chairman had expressed his interest in the French conversation. "I am very glad you liked it," said Dennis; and the poor chairman, abashed, supposed the accent had been wrong. At the end of the day the gentlemen present had been called upon for speeches—the Rev. Frederic Ingham first, as it happened; upon which Dennis had risen, and had said: "There has been so much said, and, on the whole, so well said, that I will not occupy the time." The girls were delighted, because Dr. Dabney, the year before, had given them at this occasion a scolding on impropriety of behavior at lyceum lectures. They all declared Mr. Ingham was a love—and *so* handsome! (Dennis is good looking.) Three of them, with arms behind the others' waists, followed him up to the wagon he rode home in; and a little girl with a blue sash had been sent to give him a rosebud. After this *début* in speaking, he went to the exhibition for two days more, to the mutual satisfaction of all con-

cerned. Indeed, Polly reported that he had pronounced the trustees' dinners of a higher grade than those of the parsonage. When the next term began I found six of the Academy girls had obtained permission to come across the river to attend our church. But this arrangement did not long continue.

After this he went to several Commencements for me, and ate the dinners provided. He sat through three of our Quarterly Conventions for me—always voting judiciously, by the simple rule mentioned above, of siding with the minority. And I, meanwhile, who had before been losing caste among my friends, as holding myself aloof from the associations of the body, began to rise in everybody's favor. "Ingham's a good fellow, always on hand;" "never talks much, but does the right thing at the right time;" "is not as unpunctual as he used to be—he comes early, and sits through to the end." "He has got over his old talkative habit, too. I spoke to a friend of his about it once; and I think Ingham took it kindly," etc., etc.

This voting power of Dennis was particularly valuable at the quarterly meetings of the proprietors of the Naguadavick Ferry. My wife inherited from her father some shares in that enterprise, which is not yet fully developed, though it doubtless will become a very valuable property. The law of Maine then forbade stockholders to appear by proxy at such meetings. Polly disliked to go, not being, in fact, a "hens'-rights hen," transferred her stock to me. I, after going once, disliked it more than she. But Dennis went to the next meeting, and liked it very much. He said the armchairs were good, the collation good, and the free rides to stockholders pleasant. He was a little frightened when they first took him upon one of the ferry-boats, but after two or three quarterly meetings he became quite brave.

Thus far I never had any difficulty with him. Indeed, being, as I implied, of that type which is called shiftless, he was only too happy to be told daily what to do, and to be charged not to be forthputting or in any way original in his discharge of that duty. He learned, however, to discriminate between the lines of his life, and very much preferred these stockholders' meetings and trustees' dinners and Commencement collations to another set of occasions, from which he used to beg off most piteously. Our excellent brother, Dr. Fillmore, had taken a notion at this time that our Sandemanian churches needed more expression of mutual sympathy. He insisted upon it that we were remiss. He said that if the bishop came to preach at Naguadavick all the Episcopal clergy of the neighborhood

were present; if Dr. Pond came, all the Congregational clergymen turned out to hear him; if Dr. Nichols, all the Unitarians; and he thought we owed it to each other, that, whenever there was an occasional service at a Sandemanian church, the other brethren should all, if possible, attend. "It looked well," if nothing more. Now this really meant that I had not been to hear one of Dr. Fillmore's lectures on the Ethnology of Religion. He forgot that he did not hear one of my course on the "Sandemanianism of Anselm." But I felt badly when he said it; and afterwards I always made Dennis go to hear all the brethren preach, when I was not preaching myself. This was what he took exceptions to—the only thing, as I said, which he ever did except to. Now came the advantage of his long morning nap, and of the green tea with which Polly supplied the kitchen. But he would plead, so humbly, to be let off, only from one or two! I never exempted him, however. I knew the lectures were of value, and I thought it best that he should be able to keep the connection.

Polly is more rash than I am, as the reader has observed at the outset of this memoir. She risked Dennis one night under the eyes of her own sex. Governor Gorges had always been very kind to us, and, when he gave his great annual party to the town, asked us. I confess I hated to go. I was deep in the new volume of Pfeiffer's *Mystics*, which Haliburton had just sent me from Boston. "But how rude," said Polly, "not to return the Governor's civility and Mrs. Gorges', when they will be sure to ask why you are away!" Still I demurred, and at last she, with the wit of Eve and of Semiramis conjoined, let me off by saying that if I would go in with her, and sustain the initial conversations with the Governor and ladies staying there, we would risk Dennis for the rest of the evening. And that was just what we did. She took Dennis in training all that afternoon, instructed him in fashionable conversation, cautioned him against the temptations of the supper-table—and at nine in the evening he drove us all down in the carryall. I made the grand star *entrée* with Polly and the pretty Walton girls, who were staying with us. We had put Dennis into a great rough top-coat, without his glasses; and the girls never dreamed, in the darkness, of looking at him. He sat in the carriage, at the door, while we entered. I did the agreeable to Mrs. Gorges, was introduced to her niece, Miss Fernanda; I complimented Judge Jeffries on his decision in the great case of D'Aulnay *vs.* Laconia Mining Company; I stepped into the dressing-room for a moment, stepped out for another, walked home after a nod with Dennis and tying the horse to a pump;—and while

I walked home, Mr. Frederic Ingham, my double, stepped in through the library into the Gorges' grand saloon.

Oh! Polly died of laughing as she told me of it at midnight! And even here, where I have to teach my hands to hew the beech for stakes to fence our cave, she dies of laughing as she recalls it, and says that single occasion was worth all we have paid for it. Gallant Eve that she is! She joined Dennis at the library-door, and in an instant presented him to Dr. Ochterlong, from Baltimore, who was on a visit in town, and was talking with her as Dennis came in. "Mr. Ingham would like to hear what you were telling us about your success among the German population." And Dennis bowed and said, in spite of a scowl from Polly, "I'm very glad you liked it." But Dr. Ochterlong did not observe, and plunged into the tide of explanation; Dennis listening like a prime minister, and bowing like a mandarin, which is, I suppose, the same thing. . . . Governor Gorges came to Dennis, and asked him to hand Mrs. Jeffries down to supper, a request which he heard with great joy.

Polly was skipping round the room, I guess, gay as a lark. Auchmuty came to her "in pity for poor Ingham," who was so bored by the stupid pundit; and Auchmuty could not understand why I stood so long. But when Dennis took Mrs. Jeffries down, Polly could not resist standing near them. He was a little flustered, till the sight of the eatables and drinkables gave him the same Mercian courage which it gave Diggory. A little excited then, he attempted one or two of his speeches to the judge's lady. But little he knew how hard it was to get in even a *promptu* there edgewise. "Very well, I thank you," said he, after the eating elements were adjusted; "and you?" And then did not he have to hear about the mumps, and the measles, and arnica, and belladonna, and camomile-flower, and dodecatheon, till she changed oysters for salad; and then about the old practice and the new, and what her sister said, and what her sister's friend said, and what the physician to her sister's friend said, and then what was said by the brother of the sister of the physician of the friend of her sister? . . . There was a moment's pause, as she declined champagne. "I am very glad you like it," said Dennis again, which he never should have said but to one who complimented a sermon. "Oh! you are so sharp, Mr. Ingham! No! I never drink any wine at all, except sometimes in summer a little currant shrub, from our own currants, you know. My own mother, that is, I call her my own mother, because, you know, I do not remember," etc., etc., etc.; till they came to the candied orange at the end of the feast, when Dennis, rather confused, thought he must say some-

thing, and tried No. 4,—“I agree, in general, with my friend the other side of the room,”—which he never should have said but at a public meeting. But Mrs. Jeffries, who never listens expecting to understand, caught him up instantly with “Well, I’m sure my husband returns the compliment; he always agrees with you, though we do worship with the Methodists; but you know, Mr. Ingham,” etc., etc., etc., till the move upstairs; and as Dennis led her through the hall, he was scarcely understood by any but Polly, as he said, “There has been so much said, and, on the whole, so well said, that I will not occupy the time.”

His great resource the rest of the evening was standing in the library, carrying on animated conversations with one and another in much the same way. Polly had initiated him in the mysteries of a discovery of mine, that it is not necessary to finish your sentences in a crowd, but by a sort of mumble, omitting sibilants and dentals. This, indeed, if your words fail you, answers even in public extempore speech, but better where other talking is going on. Thus: “We missed you at the Natural History Society, Ingham.” Ingham replies, “I am very gligloglum, that is, that you were mmmmm.” By gradually dropping the voice, the interlocutor is compelled to supply the answer. “Mrs. Ingham, I hope your friend Augusta is better.” Augusta has not been ill. Polly cannot think of explaining, however, and answers, “Thank you, ma’am; she is very rearason wewahwewoh,” in lower and lower tones. And Mrs. Throckmorton, who forgot the subject of which she spoke as soon as she asked the question, is quite satisfied. Dennis could see into the cardroom, and came to Polly to ask if he might not go and play all-fours. But, of course, she sternly refused. At midnight they came home delighted—Polly, as I said, wild to tell me the story of the victory; only both the pretty Walton girls said, “Cousin Frederic, you did not come near me all the evening.”

We always called him Dennis at home, for convenience, though his real name was Frederic Ingham, as I have explained. When the election day came round, however, I found that by some accident there was only one Frederic Ingham’s name on the voting list; and as I was quite busy that day in writing some foreign letters to Halle, I thought I would forego my privilege of suffrage, and stay quietly at home, telling Dennis that he might use the record on the voting-list, and vote. I gave him a ticket, which I told him he might use if he liked to. That was that very sharp election in Maine which the readers of the *Atlantic* so well remember, and it had been intimated in public that the ministers would do well not to appear at

the polls. Of course, after that, we had to appear by self or proxy. Still, Naguadavick was not then a city, and this standing in a double queue at town-meeting several hours to vote was a bore of the first water; and so when I found that there was but one Frederic Ingham on the list, and that one of us must give up, I stayed at home and finished the letters (which, indeed, procured for Fothergill his coveted appointment of Professor of Astronomy at Leavenworth), and I gave Dennis, as we called him, the chance. Something in the matter gave a good deal of popularity to the Frederic Ingham name; and at the adjourned election, next week, Frederic Ingham was chosen to the legislature. Whether this was I or Dennis I never really knew. My friends seemed to think it was I; but I felt that as Dennis had done the popular thing, he was entitled to the honor; so I sent him to Augusta when the time came; and he took the oaths. And a very valuable member he made. They appointed him on the Committee on Parishes; but I wrote a letter for him, resigning, on the ground that he took an interest in our claim to the stumpage in the minister's sixteenths of Gore A, next to No. 7, in the 10th Range. He never made any speeches, and always voted with the minority, which was what he was sent to do. He made me and himself a great many good friends, some of whom I did not afterwards recognize as quickly as Dennis did my parishioners. On one or two occasions, when there was wood to saw, I kept him at home; but I took those occasions to go to Augusta myself. Finding myself often in his vacant seat at these times, I watched the proceedings with a great deal of care; and once was so excited that I delivered my somewhat celebrated speech on the Central School-District question, a speech of which the state of Maine printed some extra copies. I believe there is no formal rule permitting strangers to speak; but no one objected. . . .

After the double had become a matter of course, for nearly twelve months before he undid me, what a year it was! Full of active life, full of happy love, of the hardest work, of the sweetest sleep, and the fulfilment of so many of the fresh aspirations and dreams of boyhood! Dennis went to every school-committee meeting, and sat through all those late wranglings, which used to keep me up till midnight and awake till morning. He attended all the lectures to which foreign exiles sent me tickets, begging me to come for the love of Heaven and of Bohemia. He accepted and used all the tickets for charity concerts which were sent to me. He appeared everywhere where it was specially desirable that "our denomination," or "our party," or "our class," or "our family," or "our street," or "our town,"

or "our country," or "our state," should be fully represented. And I fell back to that charming life which in boyhood one dreams of, when he supposes he shall do his own duty and make his own sacrifices, without being tied up with those of other people. My rusty Sanskrit, Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, German, and English began to take polish. Heavens! how little I had done with them while I attended to my *public* duties! My calls on my parishioners became the friendly, frequent, homelike sociabilities they were meant to be, instead of the hard work of a man goaded to desperation by the sight of his lists of arrears. And preaching! what a luxury preaching was when I had on Sunday the whole result of an individual, personal week, from which to speak to a people whom all that week I had been meeting as hand-to-hand-friend;—I, never tired on Sunday, and in condition to leave the sermon at home, if I chose, and preach it extempore, as all men should do always. Indeed, I wonder, when I think that a sensible people, like ours—really more attached to their clergy than they were in the lost days, when the Mathers and Nortons were noblemen—should choose to neutralize so much of their minister's lives, and destroy so much of their early training, by this undefined passion for seeing them in public. . . .

Freed from these necessities, that happy year I began to know my wife by sight. We saw each other sometimes. In those long mornings, when Dennis was in the study explaining to map-peddlers that I had eleven maps of Jerusalem already, she and I were at work together, as in those old dreamy days, and in these of our log-cabin again. But all this could not last; and at length poor Dennis, my double, overtasked in turn, undid me.

It was thus it happened. There is an excellent fellow, once a minister,—I will call him Isaacs,—who deserves well of the world till he dies, and after, because he once, in a real exigency, did the right thing, in the right way, at the right time, as no other man could do it. In the world's great football match, the ball by chance found him loitering on the outside of the field; he closed with it, "camped" it, charged it home—yes, right through the other side—not disturbed, not frightened by his own success—and, breathless, found himself a great man, as the Great Delta rang applause. But he did not find himself a rich man; and the football has never come in his way again. From that moment to this moment he has been of no use, that one can see at all. Still, for that great act we speak of Isaacs gratefully and remember him kindly; and he forges on, hoping to meet the football somewhere again. In that vague hope he had arranged a

“movement” for a general organization of the human family into Debating Clubs, County Societies, State Unions, etc., etc., with a view of inducing all children to take hold of the handles of their knives and forks, instead of the metal. Children have bad habits in that way. The movement, of course, was absurd; but we all did our best to forward, not it, but him. It came time for the annual county meeting on this subject to be held at Naguadavick. Isaacs came round, good fellow! to arrange for it—got the town-hall, got the Governor to preside (the saint!—he ought to have triplet doubles provided him by law), and then came to get me to speak. “No,” I said, “I do not believe in the enterprise. If I spoke it should be to say children should take hold of the prongs of the forks and the blades of the knives. I would subscribe ten dollars, but I would not speak a mill.” So poor Isaacs went his way sadly, to coax Auchmuty to speak, and Delafield. I went out. Not long after he came back, and told Polly that they had promised to speak, the Governor would speak, and he himself would close with the quarterly report, and some interesting anecdotes regarding Miss Biffin’s way of handling her knife and Mr. Nellis’s way of footing his fork. “Now if Mr. Ingham will only come and sit on the platform, he need not say one word; but it will show well in the paper—it will show that the Sandemanians take as much interest in the movement as the Armenians or the Mesopotamians, and will be a great favor to me.” Polly, good soul! was tempted, and she promised. She knew Mrs. Isaacs was starving, and the babies,—she knew Dennis was at home,—and she promised! Night came, and I returned. I heard her story. I was sorry. I doubted. But Polly had promised to beg me, and I dared all! I told Dennis to hold his peace, under all circumstances, and sent him down.

It was not half an hour more before he returned, wild with excitement,—in a perfect Irish fury,—which it was long before I understood. But I knew at once that he had undone me!

What happened was this. The audience got together, attracted by Governor Gorges’ name. There were a thousand people. Poor Gorges was late from Augusta. They became impatient. He came in direct from the train, at last, really ignorant of the object of the meeting. He opened it in the fewest possible words, and said other gentlemen were present who would entertain them better than he. The audience were disappointed, but waited. The Governor, prompted by Isaacs, said, “The Honorable Mr. Delafield will address you.” Delafield! He had forgotten the knives and forks, and was playing the Ruy Lopez opening at the chess-club. “The Rev. Mr. Auchmuty will

address you." Auchmuty had promised to speak late, and was at the school-committee. "I see Dr. Stearns in the hall; perhaps he will say a word." Dr. Stearns said he had come to listen and not to speak. The Governor and Isaacs whispered. The Governor looked at Dennis, who was resplendent on the platform; but Isaacs, to give him his due, shook his head. But the look was enough. A miserable lad, ill-bred, who had once been in Boston, thought it would sound well to call for me, and peeped out, "Ingham!" A few more wretches cried, "Ingham! Ingham!" Still Isaacs was firm; but the Governor, anxious, indeed, to prevent a row, knew I would say something, and said, "Our friend Mr. Ingham is always prepared; and, although we had not relied upon him, he will say a word perhaps." Applause followed, which turned Dennis's head. He arose, fluttered, and tried No. 3. "There has been so much said, and, on the whole, so well said, that I will not occupy the time!" and sat down, looking for his hat; for things seemed squally. But the people cried, "Go on! go on!" and some applauded. Dennis, still confused, but flattered by the applause, to which neither he nor I are used, rose again, and this time tried No. 2: "I am very glad you liked it!" in a sonorous, clear delivery. My best friends stared. All the people who did not know me personally yelled with delight at the aspect of the evening; the Governor was beside himself, and poor Isaacs thought he was undone! Alas, it was I! A boy in the gallery cried in a loud tone, "It's all an infernal humbug," just as Dennis, waving his hand, commanded silence, and tried No. 4: "I agree, in general, with my friend the other side of the room." The poor Governor doubted his senses and crossed to stop him—not in time, however. The same gallery-boy shouted, "How's your mother?" and Dennis, now completely lost, tried, as his last shot, No. 1, vainly: "Very well, thank you. And you?"

I think I must have been undone already. But Dennis, like another Lockhard, chose "to make sicker." The audience rose in a whirl of amazement, rage, and sorrow. Some other impertinence, aimed at Dennis, broke all restraint, and, in pure Irish, he delivered himself of an address to the gallery, inviting any person who wished to fight to come down and do so—stating, that they were all dogs and cowards, and the sons of dogs and cowards—that he would take any five of them single-handed. "Shure, I have said all his Riverance and the Misthress bade me say," cried he, in defiance; and, seizing the Governor's cane from his hand, brandished it, quarter-staff fashion, above his head. He was, indeed, got from the hall only with the greatest difficulty by the Governor, the city marshal, who

had been called in, and the superintendent of my Sunday-School.

The universal impression, of course, was that the Rev. Frederic Ingham had lost all command of himself in some of those haunts of intoxication which for fifteen years I have been laboring to destroy. Till this moment, indeed, that is the impression in Naguadavick. This number of the *Atlantic* will relieve from it a hundred friends of mine who have been sadly wounded by that notion now for years; but I shall not be likely ever to show my head there again.

No! My double has undone me.

We left town at seven the next morning. I came to No. 9 in the Third Range, and settled on the Minister's Lot. In the new towns of Maine, the first settled minister has a gift of a hundred acres of land. I am the first settled minister in No. 9. My wife and little Paulina are my parish. We raise corn enough to live on in summer. We kill bear's meat enough to carbonize it in winter. I work on steadily on my *Traces of Sandemanianism in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries*, which I hope to persuade Phillips, Samson & Co. to publish next year. We are very happy, but the world thinks we are undone.

*If, Yes, and Perhaps, 1868*

# The Rise of Lapham Paint

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

“I came down to a little place called Lumberville, and picked up what jobs I could get. I worked round at the saw-mills, and I was ostler a while at the hotel—I always *did* like a good horse. Well, I *wa'nt* exactly a college graduate, and I went to school odd times. I got to driving the stage after while, and by and by I *bought* the stage and run the business myself. Then I hired the tavern-stand, and—well to make a long story short, then I got married. Yes,” said Lapham, with pride, “I married the school-teacher. We did pretty well with the hotel, and my wife she was always at me to paint up. Well, I put it off, and *put* it off, as a man will, till one day I give in, and says I, ‘Well, *let's* paint up. Why, Pert,—m'wife's name's Persis,—‘I've got a whole paint-mine out on the farm. Let's go out and look at it.’ So we drove out. I'd let the place for seventy-five dollars a year to a shif'less kind of a Kanuck that had come down that way; and I'd hated to see the house with him in it; but we drove out one Saturday afternoon, and we brought back about a bushel of the stuff in the buggy-seat, and I tried it crude, and I tried it burnt; and I liked it. M'wife she liked it too. There wa'nt any painter by trade in the village, and I mixed it myself. Well, sir, that tavern's got that coat of paint on it yet, and it hain't ever had any other, and I don't know's it ever will. Well, you know, I felt as if it was a kind of harumscarum experiment, all the while; and I presume I shouldn't have tried it, but I kind of liked to do it because father'd always set so much store by his paint-mine. And when I'd got the first coat on,”—Lapham called it *cut*,—“I presume I must have set as much as half an hour, looking at it and thinking how he would have enjoyed it. I've had my share of luck in this world, and I ain't a-going to complain on my *own* account, but I've noticed that most things get along too late for most people. It made me feel bad, and it took all the pride out of my success with the paint, thinking of father. Seemed to me I might'a' taken more interest in it when he was by to see; but we've got to live and learn. Well, I called my wife out,—I'd tried it on the back of the house, you know,—and she left her dishes,—I can remember she came out with her sleeves rolled up and set down alongside of me on the trestle,—and says I, ‘What do you think,

Persis?’ And says she, ‘Well, you hain’t got a paint-mine, Silas Lapham; you’ve got a *gold-mine*.’ She always was just so enthusiastic about things. Well, it was just after two or three boats had burnt up out West, and a lot of lives lost, and there was a great cry about non-inflammable paint, and I guess that was what was in her mind. ‘Well, I guess it ain’t any gold-mine, Persis,’ says I; ‘but I guess it *is* a paint-mine. I’m going to have it analysed, and if it turns out what I think it is, I’m going to work it. And if father hadn’t had such a long name, I should call it the Nehemiah Lapham Mineral Paint. But, any rate, every barrel of it, and every keg, and every bottle, and every package, big or little, has got to have the initials and figures N. L. f. 1835, S. L. t. 1855, on it. Father found it in 1835, and I tried it in 1855.’ . . .

“I set to work and I got a man down from Boston; and I carried him out to the farm, and he analysed it—made a regular job of it. Well, sir, we built a kiln, and we kept a lot of that paint-ore red-hot for forty-eight hours; kept the Kanuck and his family up, firing. The presence of iron in the ore showed with the magnet from the start; and when he came to test it, he found out that it contained about seventy-five per cent. of the peroxide of iron.”

Lapham pronounced the scientific phrases with a sort of reverent satisfaction, as if awed through his pride by a little lingering uncertainty as to what peroxide was. He accented it as if it were *purr-ox-eyed*; and Bartley had to get him to spell it.

“Well, and what then?” he asked, when he had made a note of the percentage.

“What then?” echoed Lapham. “Well, then, the fellow set down and told me, ‘You’ve got a paint here,’ says he, ‘that’s going to drive every other mineral paint out of the market. Why,’ says he, ‘it’ll drive ’em right into the Back Bay!’ Of course, *I* didn’t know what the Back Bay was then; but I begun to open my eyes; thought I’d had ’em open before, but I guess I hadn’t. Says he, ‘That paint has got hydraulic cement in it, and it can stand fire and water and acids;’ he named over a lot of things. Says he, ‘It’ll mix easily with linseed oil, whether you want to use it boiled or raw; and it ain’t a-going to crack nor fade any; and it ain’t a-going to scale. When you’ve got your arrangements for burning it properly, you’re going to have a paint that will stand like the everlasting hills, in every climate under the sun.’ Then he went into a lot of particulars, and I begun to think he was drawing a long-bow, and meant to make his bill accordingly. So I kept pretty cool; but the fellow’s bill didn’t amount to anything hardly—said I might pay him after

I got going; young chap, and pretty easy; but every word he said was gospel. Well, I ain't a-going to brag up my paint; I don't suppose you came here to hear me blow—"

"Oh yes, I did," said Bartley. "That's what I want. Tell all there is to tell, and I can boil it down afterward. A man can't make a greater mistake with a reporter than to hold back anything out of modesty. It may be the very thing we want to know. What we want is the whole truth; and more; we've got so much modesty of our own that we can temper almost any statement."

Lapham looked as if he did not quite like this tone, and he resumed a little more quietly. "Oh, there isn't really very much more to say about the paint itself. But you can use it for almost anything where a paint is wanted, inside or out. It'll prevent decay, and it'll stop it, after it's begun, in tin or iron. You can paint the inside of a cistern or a bathtub with it, and water won't hurt it; and you can paint a steam-boiler with it, and heat won't. You can cover a brick wall with it, or a railroad car, or the deck of a steamboat, and you can't do a better thing for either."

"Never tried it on the human conscience, I suppose," suggested Bartley.

"No, sir," replied Lapham gravely. "I guess you want to keep that as free from paint as you can, if you want much use of it. I never cared to try any of it on mine." Lapham suddenly lifted his bulk up out of his swivel-chair, and led the way out into the wareroom beyond the office partitions, where rows and ranks of casks, barrels, and kegs stretched dimly back to the rear of the building, and diffused an honest, clean, wholesome smell of oil and paint. They were labelled and branded as containing each so many pounds of Lapham's Mineral Paint, and each bore the mystic devices, *N. L. f.* 1835—*S. L. t.* 1855. "There!" said Lapham, kicking one of the largest casks with the toe of his boot, "that's about our biggest package; and here," he added, laying his hand affectionately on the head of a very small keg, as if it were the head of a child, which it resembled in size, "this is the smallest. We used to put the paint on the market dry, but now we grind every ounce of it in oil—very best quality of linseed oil—and warrant it. We find it gives more satisfaction. Now, come back to the office, and I'll show you our fancy brands."

It was very cool and pleasant in that dim wareroom, with the rafters showing overhead in a cloudy perspective, and darkening away into the perpetual twilight at the rear of the building; and Bartley had found an agreeable seat on the head of a half-barrel of the paint, which he was reluctant to leave. But he rose and fol-

lowed the vigorous lead of Lapham back to the office where the sun of a long summer afternoon was just beginning to glare in at the window. On shelves opposite Lapham's desk were tin cans of various sizes, arranged in tapering cylinders, and showing, in a pattern diminishing toward the top, the same label borne by the casks and barrels in the wareroom. Lapham merely waved his hand toward these; but when Bartley, after a comprehensive glance at them, gave his whole attention to a row of clean, smooth jars, where different tints of the paint showed through flawless glass, Lapham smiled, and waited in pleased expectation.

"Hello!" said Bartley. "That's pretty!"

"Yes," assented Lapham, "it is rather nice. It's our latest thing, and we find it takes with customers first-rate. Look here!" he said, taking down one of the jars, and pointing to the first line of the label.

Bartley read, "THE PERSIS BRAND," and then he looked at Lapham and smiled.

"After *her*, of course," said Lapham. "Got it up and put the first of it on the market *her* last birthday. She was pleased."

"I should think she might have been" said Bartley, while he made a note of the appearance of the jars.

"I don't know about your mentioning it in your interview," said Lapham dubiously.

"That's going into the interview, Mr. Lapham, if nothing else does. Got a wife myself, and I know just how you feel." . . .

"Is that so?" said Lapham, recognising with a smile another of the vast majority of married Americans; a few underrate their wives, but the rest think them supernal in intelligence and capability. . . .

"I suppose," said Bartley, returning to business, "that you didn't let the grass grow under your feet much after you found out what was in your paint-mine?"

"No, sir," answered Lapham, withdrawing his eyes from a long stare at Bartley, in which he had been seeing himself a young man again, in the first days of his married life. "I went right back to Lumberville and sold out everything, and put all I could rake and scrape together into paint. And Mis' Lapham was with me every time. No hang back about *her*. I tell you she was a *woman!*"

Bartley laughed. "That's the sort most of us marry."

"No, we don't," said Lapham. "Most of us marry silly little girls grown up to *look* like women."

“Well, I guess that’s about so,” assented Bartley, as if upon second thought.

“If it hadn’t been for her,” resumed Lapham, “the paint wouldn’t have come to anything. I used to tell her it wa’nt the seventy-five per cent. of purr-ox-eyed of iron in the *ore* that made that paint go; it was the seventy-five per cent. of purr-ox-eyed of iron in *her*.” . . .

“In less’n six months there wa’nt a board-fence, nor a bridge-girder, nor a dead wall, nor a barn, nor a face of rock in that whole region that didn’t have ‘Lapham’s Mineral Paint—Specimen’ on it in the three colours we begun by making.” Bartley had taken his seat on the window-sill, and Lapham standing before him, now put up his huge foot close to Bartley’s thigh; neither of them minded that.

“I’ve heard a good deal of talk about that S. T.—1860—X. man, and the stove-blackening man, and the kidney-cure man, because they advertised in that way; and I’ve read articles about it in the papers; but I don’t see where the joke comes in, exactly. So long as the people that own the barns and fences don’t object, I don’t see what the public has got to do with it. And I never saw anything so very sacred about a big rock, along a river or in a pasture, that it wouldn’t do to put mineral paint on it in three colours. I wish some of the people that talk about the landscape, and *write* about it, had to bu’st one of them rocks *out* of the landscape with powder, or dig a hole to bury it in, as we used to have to do up on the farm; I guess they’d sing a little different tune about the profanation of scenery. There ain’t any man enjoys a sightly bit of nature—a smooth piece of interval with half a dozen good-sized wine-glass elms in it—~~more~~ more than *I* do. But I ain’t a-going to stand up for every big ugly rock I come across, as if we were all a set of dumn Druids. I say the landscape was made for man, and not man for the landscape.”

“Yes,” said Bartley carelessly; “it was made for the stove-polish man and the kidney-cure man.”

“It was made for any man that knows how to use it,” Lapham returned, insensible to Bartley’s irony. “Let ’em go and live with nature in the *winter*, up there along the Canada line, and I guess they’ll get enough of her for one while. Well—where was I?”

“Decorating the landscape,” said Bartley.

“Yes, sir; I started right there at Lumberville, and it give the place a start too. You won’t find it on the map now; and you won’t find it in the gazeteer. I give a pretty good lump of money to build a town-hall, about five years back, and the first meeting they held

in it they voted to change the name,—Lumberville *wa'nt* a name,—and it's Lapham now." . . .

"Works there?"

"Yes; works there. Well, sir, just about the time I got started, the war broke out; and it knocked my paint higher than a kite. The thing dropped perfectly dead. I presume that if I'd had any sort of influence, I might have got it into Government hands, for gun-carriages and army wagons, and may be on board Government vessels. But I hadn't, and we had to face the music. I was about broken-hearted, but m'wife she looked at it another way. 'I guess it's a providence,' says she. 'Silas, I guess you've got a country that's worth fighting for. Any rate, you better go out and give it a chance.' Well, sir, I went. I knew she meant business. It might kill her to have me go, but it would kill her sure if I stayed. She was one of that kind. I went. Her last words was, 'I'll look after the paint, Si.' We hadn't but just one little girl then,—boy'd died,—and Mis' Lapham's mother was livin' with us; and I knew if times *did* anyways come up again, m'wife'd know just what to do. So I went. I got through; and you can call me Colonel, if you want to. Feel there!" Lapham took Bartley's thumb and forefinger and put them on a bunch in his leg, just above the knee. "Anything hard?"

"Ball?"

Lapham nodded. "Gettysburg. That's my thermometer. If it wa'nt for that, I shouldn't know enough to come in when it rains."

Bartley laughed at a joke which betrayed some evidences of wear. "And when you came back, you took hold of the paint and rushed it."

"I took hold of the paint and rushed it—all I could," said Lapham, with less satisfaction that he had hitherto shown in his autobiography. "But I found that I had got back to another world. The day of small things was past, and I don't suppose it will ever come again in this country. My wife was at me all the time to take a partner—somebody with capital; but I couldn't seem to bear the idea. That paint was like my own blood to me. To have anybody else concerned in it was like—well, I don't know what. I saw it was the thing to do; but I tried to fight it off, and I tried to joke it off. I used to say, 'Why didn't you take a partner yourself, Persis, while I was away?' And she'd say, 'Well, if you hadn't come back, I should, Si.' Always *did* like a joke about as well as any woman I ever saw. Well, I had to come to it. I took a partner." Lapham dropped the bold blue eyes with which he had been till now staring

into Bartley's face, and the reporter knew that here was a place for asterisks in his interview, if interviews were faithful. "He had money enough," continued Lapham, with a suppressed sigh; "but he didn't know anything about paint. We hung on together for a year or two. And then we quit."

"And he had the experience," suggested Bartley, with companionable ease.

"I had some of the experience too," said Lapham, with a scowl; and Bartley divined, through the freemasonry of all who have sore places in their memories, that this was a point which he must not touch again.

"And since that, I suppose, you've played it alone."

"I've played it alone."

"You must ship some of this paint of yours to foreign countries, Colonel?" suggested Bartley, putting on a professional air.

"We ship it to all parts of the world. It goes to South America, lots of it. It goes to Australia, and it goes to India, and it goes to China, and it goes to the Cape of Good Hope. It'll stand any climate. Of course, we don't export these fancy brands much. They're for home use. But we're introducing them elsewhere. Here." Lapham pulled open a drawer, and showed Bartley a lot of labels in different languages—Spanish, French, German, and Italian. "We expect to do a good business in all those countries. We've got our agencies in Cadiz now, and in Paris, and in Hamburg, and in Leghorn. It's a thing that's bound to make its way. Yes, sir. Wherever a man has got a ship, or a bridge, or a dock, or a house, or a car, or a fence, or a pig-pen anywhere in God's universe to paint, that's the paint for him, and he's bound to find it out sooner or later. You pass a ton of that paint dry through a blast-furnace, and you'll get a quarter of a ton of pig-iron. I believe in my paint. I believe it's a blessing to the world. When folks come in, and kind of smell round, and ask me what I mix it with, I always say, 'Well, in the first place, I mix it with *Faith*, and after that I grind it up with the best quality of boiled linseed oil that money will buy.'"

*The Rise of Silas Lapham, 1885*

# The Death of the Hired Man

ROBERT FROST

Mary sat musing on the lamp-flame at the table  
Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step,  
She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage  
To meet him in the doorway with the news  
And put him on his guard. "Silas is back."  
She pushed him outward with her through the door  
And shut it after her. "Be kind," she said.  
She took the market things from Warren's arms  
And set them on the porch, then drew him down  
To sit beside her on the wooden steps.

"When was I ever anything but kind to him?  
But I'll not have the fellow back," he said.  
'I told him so last haying, didn't I?  
'If he left then,' I said, 'that ended it.'  
What good is he? Who else will harbour him  
At his age for the little he can do?  
What help he is there's no depending on.  
Off he goes always when I need him most.  
'He thinks he ought to earn a little pay,  
Enough at least to buy tobacco with,  
So he won't have to beg and be beholden.'  
'All right,' I say, 'I can't afford to pay  
Any fixed wages, though I wish I could.'  
'Someone else can.' 'Then someone else will have to.'  
I shouldn't mind his bettering himself  
If that was what it was. You can be certain,  
When he begins like that, there's someone at him  
Trying to coax him off with pocket-money,—  
In haying time, when any help is scarce.  
In winter he comes back to us. I'm done."

"Sh! not so loud: he'll hear you," Mary said.

"I want him to: he'll have to soon or late."

“He’s worn out. He’s asleep beside the stove.  
When I came up from Rowe’s I found him here,  
Huddled against the barn-door fast asleep,  
A miserable sight, and frightening, too—  
You needn’t smile—I didn’t recognise him—  
I wasn’t looking for him—and he’s changed.  
Wait till you see.”

“Where did you say he’d been?”

“He didn’t say. I dragged him to the house,  
And gave him tea and tried to make him smoke.  
I tried to make him talk about his travels.  
Nothing would do: he just kept nodding off.”

“What did he say? Did he say anything?”

“But little.”

“Anything? Mary, confess  
He said he’d come to ditch the meadow for me.”

“Warren!”

“But did he? I just want to know.”

“Of course he did. What would you have him say?  
Surely you wouldn’t grudge the poor old man  
Some humble way to save his self-respect.  
He added, if you really care to know,  
He meant to clear the upper pasture, too.  
That sounds like something you have heard before?  
Warren, I wish you could have heard the way  
He jumbled everything. I stopped to look  
Two or three times—he made me feel so queer—  
To see if he was talking in his sleep.  
He ran on Harold Wilson—you remember—  
The boy you had in haying four years since.  
He’s finished school, and teaching in his college.  
Silas declares you’ll have to get him back.  
He says they two will make a team for work:  
Between them they will lay this farm as smooth!

The way he mixed that in with other things.  
He thinks young Wilson a likely lad, though daft  
On education—you know how they fought  
All through July under the blazing sun,  
Silas up on the cart to build the load,  
Harold along beside to pitch it on.”

“Yes, I took care to keep well out of earshot.”

“Well, those days trouble Silas like a dream.  
You wouldn’t think they would. How some things linger!  
Harold’s young college boy’s assurance piqued him.  
After so many years he still keeps finding  
Good arguments he sees he might have used.  
I sympathise. I know just how it feels  
To think of the right thing to say too late.  
Harold’s associated in his mind with Latin.  
He asked me what I thought of Harold’s saying  
He studied Latin like the violin  
Because he liked it—that an argument!  
He said he couldn’t make the boy believe  
He could find water with a hazel prong—  
Which showed how much good school had ever done him.  
He wanted to go over that. But most of all  
He thinks if he could have another chance  
To teach him how to build a load of hay—”

“I know, that’s Silas’ one accomplishment.  
He bundles every forkful in its place,  
And tags and numbers it for future reference,  
So he can find and easily dislodge it  
In the unloading. Silas does that well.  
He takes it out in bunches like birds’ nests.  
You never see him standing on the hay  
He’s trying to lift, straining to lift himself.”

“He thinks if he could teach him that, he’d be  
Some good perhaps to someone in the world.  
He hates to see a boy the fool of books.  
Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk,  
And nothing to look backward to with pride,  
And nothing to look forward to with hope,  
So now and never any different.”

Part of a moon was falling down the west,  
Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills.  
Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw  
And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand  
Among the harp-like morning-glory strings,  
Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves,  
As if she played unheard the tenderness  
That wrought on him beside her in the night.  
“Warren,” she said, “he has come home to die:  
You needn’t be afraid he’ll leave you this time.”

“Home,” he mocked gently.

“Yes, what else but home?  
It all depends on what you mean by home.  
Of course he’s nothing to us, any more  
Than was the hound that came a stranger to us  
Out of the woods, worn out upon the trail.”

“Home is the place where, when you have to go there,  
They have to take you in.”

“I should have called it  
Something you somehow haven’t to deserve.”

Warren leaned out and took a step or two,  
Picked up a little stick, and brought it back  
And broke it in his hand and tossed it by.  
“Silas has better claim on us you think  
Than on his brother? Thirteen little miles  
As the road winds would bring him to his door.  
Silas has walked that far no doubt to-day.  
Why didn’t he go there? His brother’s rich,  
A somebody—director in the bank.”

“He never told us that.”

“We know it though.”

“I think his brother ought to help, of course.  
I’ll see to that if there is need. He ought of right  
To take him in, and might be willing to—

He may be better than appearances.  
But have some pity on Silas. Do you think  
If he'd had any pride in claiming kin  
Or anything he looked for from his brother,  
He'd keep so still about him all this time?"

"I wonder what's between them."

"I can tell you.

Silas is what he is—we wouldn't mind him—  
But just the kind that kinsfolk can't abide.  
He never did a thing so very bad.  
He don't know why he isn't quite as good  
As anyone. He won't be made ashamed  
To please his brother, worthless though he is."

"I can't think Si ever hurt anyone."

"No, but he hurt my heart the way he lay  
And rolled his old head on that sharp-edged chair-back.  
He wouldn't let me put him on the lounge.  
You must go in and see what you can do.  
I made the bed up for him there to-night.  
You'll be surprised at him—how much he's broken.  
His working days are done; I'm sure of it."

"I'd not be in a hurry to say that."

"I haven't been. Go, look, see for yourself.  
But, Warren, please remember how it is:  
He's come to help you ditch the meadow.  
He has a plan. You mustn't laugh at him.  
He may not speak of it, and then he may.  
I'll sit and see if that small sailing cloud  
Will hit or miss the moon."

It hit the moon.

Then there were three there, making a dim row,  
The moon, the little silver cloud, and she.  
Warren returned—too soon, it seemed to her,  
Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited.

"Warren," she questioned.

"Dead," was all he answered.

*North of Boston, 1914*

# Why Is a Bostonian?

HARRISON RHODES

It is no bad thing to pass from . . . the blousy beauty of Manhattan to . . . the more frugal, nipped loveliness of Boston. Of course, the New-Yorker might well feel terror on his arrival in Boston, especially if it is after night-fall, in that strange Back Bay station where the electric lamps seem to produce light without shedding it. He might reasonably fear that now justice is at last to be meted out to him. But when the first moment's panic is over he cannot but feel, as does doubtless the repatriate Bostonian, that the contrast is, for the time being at least, agreeable between what he has left and the cooler, grayer, more distingüished civilization to which he has come. More distingüished, in the accurate sense of that word, Boston is. While the national metropolis is at once vehement and vague, the New England capital is more measured, more clean-cut, more distingüished in the sense of having somehow so concentrated and clarified its special flavor that no one can for a moment doubt that—for better or worse—Boston is Boston. When the sharp east wind has cleared away the vapors of Broadway, New York becomes less an actuality than a nightmare, and the northern town and its inhabitants are perceived to be standing very firmly on their own feet.

These northern folk are passionately Bostonian—if they are passionately anything. It is pleasant for a moment to think of the lady living in Milton (a town of concentrated Bostonianism) who said of her son, whose career in the diplomatic service of his country had kept him in Paris for several years, that her only fear was that he should “get out of touch with Milton”! There was no confusion in her mind as to what is valuable in life. In this matter of values and belief in Boston the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities presented itself lately to great advantage, gallantly going to the courts to prevent the alien—generally French-Canadian—from changing his name by the ordinary legal processes to that of any of Boston's old, historic families. There is a something here that insists on being like the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta. And yet there is also something magnificent—in a democracy—in the fact that you can become Smith, but never—shall we say Homans?

The intentions of this article—though honorable—are not topo-

graphical, yet something must be said of the look of Boston, for it is indicative of the town's inner quality—as indeed to any one who has a feeling for the personality of places is always the look of streets and squares and parks. New York sprawls; Boston really composes itself around Beacon Hill, and falls away from the lovely, peaceful, red-brick quarter which surrounds the State House to the business district and the foreign North End on one side, and on the other to the Back Bay, the great South End, the huge, trailing suburbs that lie farther out, and finally the New England country of which it is the metropolis and the commercial and spiritual head. Somehow all through the town one gets hints of the great tributary province. There is a little shop near the busy center where are displayed in the window slippery-elm and licorice sticks—does the sight not bring all New England's rocky fields and white villages immediately before your eyes?

The State House is to the eye as to the imagination the center of New England, and its gilded dome rising over the dark-green of the elms on the Common is typical of the unexuberant, distinguished beauty of this Northern Athens. There is probably quite as much gold upon the dome as would be necessary to decorate a New York bar-room. But in the former case there is no vulgar ostentation in its use. There is not even the kind of warm, barbaric lavishness which incrusts the Venetian St. Mark's with the precious metal. The Bostonian State House seems instead to proclaim that here in a shrewd, inclement climate and upon an arid, stony soil New England industry and thrift have won a living and even wealth, and that when the occasion reasonably and sanely demands it New England can be lavish, almost spendthrift. You get a sense everywhere in Boston that they spend money upon public enterprises like state houses, opera-houses, art museums, and so forth because there is a need to have such things and the money can be found, not because the money is there and there is a need to find some way to spend it—the latter being a much more characteristic American frame of mind. Reason rather than emotion guides New England expenditure, and the result is a cool and restrained distinction which the wanton cities of the South and West never quite attain.

The old Boston dwellings upon Beacon Hill have this look of tempered luxury to perfection. But what is more remarkable is the sobriety of domestic architecture in the newer districts, even in that decorous Commonwealth Avenue, in which the true Bostonian so fantastically asks the stranger to detect a note of the vulgarity of the *nouveau riche*. The Louises have never wrought much of their

French mischief in the Back Bay. A certain indigenous ugliness of architecture is preferred, solid and roomy, suggesting comfort rather than slender, gilded elegance. There is not much foreign lace nonsense at the windows; instead sometimes only simple, colored silk curtains drawn back to admit the sun and allow its due hygienic effect. Where the outlook is toward the south, plants flourish in the Bostonian windows, and the passer-by instinctively feels that they actually grow there, and may even be watered by the ladies of the house instead of being merely a temporary installation by some expensive florist, to be lavishly and immediately replaced when neglect has withered them.

The Bostonian interior, too, has something of this frugal quality, and may be recognized even in houses in the Middle West where the influence of the summer upon the North Shore has chastened the exuberance of taste natural in those remoter regions. There is something extremely pleasant in these sunny, cleanly scoured, airy, rather scantily furnished rooms, with big expanses of polished floor and well-worn furniture. They seem a little old-fashioned now, but this is merely a proof that taste struck Boston in something like the '70's of the last century, a little before it hit our other towns.

There is, of course, a comic side to this frugality. One can imagine that in the early esthetic days the inexpensiveness of the jar of dried cattails was not without its appeal to the Bostonian decorator. No Bostonian thinks of spending his income; no New-Yorker thinks of spending merely his income: this is an exaggeration of something fundamentally true. The solid, piled-up, quiet wealth of Massachusetts is enormous—what the department-store experts call the “shopping power” of the regions within a forty-mile circle around the State House dome is some amazing proportion of the purchasing ability of the whole country. Yet Boston shops have never the air of inviting gay, wayward extravagance, the highest-priced ones are the least obtrusive, and the best always seem as if they could be instantly adapted to the sale of that traditional black silk of our grandmothers which could “stand alone.”

Bostonian spending is the result of mature and deliberate thought. It is rarely vulgar, but it knows nothing of the spendthrift's *joie de vivre*. People in New York may dine at the Ritz from obscure motives of economy, a vague feeling that a holiday for the servants at home may make them more efficient at other times. In Boston they eat in restaurants, one somehow feels, only after fasting and prayer. The name given at once to the latest smart hotel, “The Costly-Pleasure,” is significant. There is even something a little grim about

the phrase; it is almost as if the costliness of pleasure repelled instead of allured, as it does in less serious towns. Young men in evening dress do not idly stroll forth into the Bostonian streets with their overcoats carelessly unbuttoned; it would give a false idea that a white-waistcoated Costly-Pleasure night-life is real Bostonianism. They hurry into motors and taxis and are about their business of dining and dancing seriously, almost half apologetically. There is, in short, very little bead on native Boston pleasure; it does not run to froth.

The job of being very young and very gay and very foolish is left to Harvard undergraduates. The proximity of a great supply of young men with hearty appetites and strong dancing legs has made Boston fashion dependent and complaisant. The boys, in consequence, do all the things which gay young men do in light magazine fiction. They go to parties with a self-confident indifference as to whether they have been invited or not. And there is a pretty story of some lads bringing suit-cases from Cambridge, in which they packed bottles of champagne, thus transferring supplies to the groves of Academe after the ball. It is no idle boast of the enthusiastic advocates of Harvard education that youth there is more prepared to deal with the great world than are the students of a country college. The crimson thread of Harvard is woven into the very fabric of Bostonian existence; yet though it is perpetually there, it always seems exotic.

The Bostonian opera—now temporarily suspended—was beautifully Bostonian; it presented in agreeable clearness the indigenous social quality. The decoration of the house was quiet gray and gold, and the garb of the audience had on the whole something of the same sobriety. To this effect the native frugality doubtless contributed; on opera nights the streets leading to the edifice were thronged with intrepid women equipped to give battle to extravagance for music's sake, with galoshes and woolen scarfs—in this rude Northern climate even “fascinators” must be woolen. If an Italian lady in evening dress could not afford a cab to the opera, she would quite simply stay at home—and yet we prate of the love of music nourished in those sunny climes! This tribute to ladies in fascinators is not to be taken as meaning that there were not more luxurious women—and plenty—in the stalls and boxes—lovely, carriage-borne creatures, expensively dressed and well jeweled, probably with the best old Brazilian stones; the point is that the total effect of the Bostonian audience was what it rarely is in opera-houses—subordinate to the stage.

The opening night was an incredible event. Banquet parties of the gayest Bostonians had gathered to dine at an hour when food would poison the fashionable people of other cities, and the crush of carriages was beyond everything ever known, not because more people were going to the opera than go in other cities, but because, for the first time in the history of opera, every one wanted to arrive on time. The intervals of the performance were devoted to a general promenade, in which many boxholders joined. Indeed, the attention paid to the occupants of boxes by the general audience was barely sufficient to induce female loveliness to display its charm in the traditional entr'acte manner—the ladies, if the truth be told, excited about the same amount of admiration as did the silver-gilt soda-water fountain which had been installed in the foyer. Here, it seemed to the irreverent outsider, the last word had been said. To have linked opera with the nut-sundae is to have, once for all, domesticated the gay, wayward institution and made it Boston's harmless, admirable own.

Light-minded comment, however, never discloses more than one side of a medal. The Bostonian opera showed, as a matter of fact, an admirable and sane sense of proportion. It was not the London, the Paris, or the New York opera. Why, pray, should it have been? It was opera of exactly the size and sumptuousness which it was likely that a town of Boston's extent and wealth could afford. It seemed something which could reasonably hope to exist, not the product of a spasmodic, hysterical effort such as occasionally brings fabulously paid singers to some of our smaller cities for a feverish May Festival or special operatic week. It was not a provincial enterprise, because it was not aping any metropolis. It was the opera of the capital of New England, and it stood firmly, like many other neighboring institutions, upon its own sturdy galoshed, Bostonian feet. It may, of course, always be open to question whether operatic art is not a too essentially artificial and emotional blend ever to please the Bostonian public as does the classically severe fare offered in Symphony Hall. But the Huntington Avenue opera was meant to stand or fall by the genuine music-loving support of its public. Even if the operatic dose was bitter, it was to be disguised by no "diamond horseshoe," by no soft Ionian ways. And who shall say that, though now suspended, the Boston opera has not had its nation-wide effect? Has not its gifted scene-painter already been chosen by New York to do the decoration for its leading summer "girl-show," and does he not thus continue to enliven Boston?

Culture has always seemed to the outsider a little rigorous in

Boston. But as one looks over the whole field of American life one is inclined to say that desperate situations demand desperate remedies, and that to have caught culture in any trap, even just to have got it fighting in a corner, is an achievement.

This is not altogether a question of art, though art is no doubt one of the town's chief preoccupations. Still less is it a question of producing art. It is no great reproach to Boston that it is nowadays more a center of appreciation than creation. There is no question of where the divine afflatus blows most fiercely. New York is the mart, and that is about all there is to be said upon an already threadbare subject.

Culture has, perhaps, more to do with education than with art. We study enough in America—that is, we go to schools and colleges—but somehow, it may as well be admitted frankly, we do not succeed in weaving our education into the very fabric of our daily social intercourse; we are not cultivated in the unobtrusive, easy way of the best Englishmen and Frenchmen. Now the newspaper humorists' best jokes hinge upon the alleged universality of Boston culture. And though the alien visitor may never find the infant who spouts Greek while brandishing his rattle, he will in simple justice admit that education has gone both far and deep in Boston, that slang is not the only dialect spoken, and that even among shop-girls and elevator-boys some traces of our original national speech are still to be detected.

Here, parenthetically, it may be said that what is meant by Bostonians speaking English is the words themselves rather than the intonation and pronunciation with which they are uttered. The "Boston accent" is of course famous and cannot but fail to give the keenest pleasure to even a child traveling thither. The point to be made here is that it does not, as the Bostonians appear to think, approximate to the English accent of England any more than any other of our national accents. The total elision of the R and the amazing broad, flat A—as in "Park Street" and "Harvard College"—give to Bostonian speech a magnificently indigenous tang, hint at juniper and spruce forests and rocky fields and pumpkins and Thanksgiving and pie; make you feel again how triumphantly New England is new, and not old, English. But its vocabulary is, on the whole, the best chosen of all the American dialects.

It is somewhat difficult to find in ordinary Bostonian speech the ten and twelve syllabled words of which it is popularly supposed to be exclusively composed. But the joke is so old that there must be something in it. As far back as Brook Farm it was alleged that they said, "Cut the pie from the center to the periphery," and

asked, "Is the butter within your sphere of influence?" But this was humor, as New England as a wintergreen lozenge. It was a by-product of an unashamed passion for education which distinguished American antebellum days. Even in the Middle West, when James Garfield, later to be President, with his friends in the little fresh-water college of Hiram, indulged in "stiling," as they termed this humorous riding of the high-horses of the language, they were in the Bostonian tradition. "Stiling" has perhaps disappeared. But there are here and there indications of the survival of the English of a robuster period. The old lady who said that she didn't, after all, know that Bostonians were so "thundering pious," produced with the phrase all the effect of an Elizabethan oath. She made you feel that Bostonian culture was no mere thin affair of yesterday.

It should be acknowledged handsomely that there is a certain amenity of tone in the town which comes not so much from exuberant good nature as from a reasoned belief in life's higher interest. The policeman who in Commonwealth Avenue used to stop promenading strangers and urge them to turn and admire the sunset was extending the city's hospitality no less to nature's beauty than to the visitors. He was notably Bostonian in that he was ashamed neither of the sunset nor of his belief that pleasure was to be derived from its contemplation. His culture was genuinely a part of his existence, of his everyday life. And culture is unquestionably a more integral part of Boston's normal existence than of our other cities' lives. Only in Boston, to imagine a concrete and pleasing example, could a lady, if she were so inclined, be distinguished by a love for extreme *décolletage* and for early Buddhist philosophy. There is, in Boston, nothing essentially inharmonious in such a combination.

In any case, variations from a standard type are not so severely penalized in Boston as in other parts of our country. Eccentricity is almost encouraged; to take but one example, old age is openly, almost brazenly, permitted. Just how they kill the old off in New York is not known, but they get rid of them somehow. Boston, on the contrary, has famous old people, especially old ladies, and the community's pride in them is not merely that they have been able so long to withstand the Boston climate. These veterans do not eat their evening meal up-stairs on a tray; instead, their visit to a dinner-table honors and enlivens the board. There is something extraordinarily exciting in meeting the lady whose witticisms were famous when you were almost a child and finding her still tossing

them off so vigorously and gaily that you can with a clear conscience encourage your own children to grow up with the promise that when they are old enough to dine out they, too, shall be privileged to go to Boston and hear really good talk.

The New England capital cherishes affectionately links with the past. There was until lately for some favored people the possibility of going to tea in a faded, old-fashioned Boston drawing-room, from the windows of which you saw the sunset across the Charles River basin, and hearing wise, graceful, tender talk that made the literary past of England and America for almost three-quarters of a century seem like the pleasant gossip of to-day. The delight of such moments in the fading light was poignant—the tears would come into one's eyes at the realization that it was all too good to be true and also too good to last.

The respect for the person or the thing which has become "an institution" is always to be noted with interest in our American life. And for an evening newspaper—a vulgar and fly-blown thing elsewhere—to have a half-sacred character is possible only in Boston. The publication in question is not thought of as a mere private enterprise; it is integrally a part of the whole community's life, its policy and its grammar are both constant matters for the searchings of the New England conscience. It is even solemnly asserted—by those who should know—that more Bostonians die on Friday than on any other day because they thus make sure of being in the special Saturday night obituary notices! To pay, even in the date of death, such a tribute to the Bostonian tradition is magnificent.

But if one is to speak of institutions, there is of course Harvard College, without which it is impossible to imagine Boston and Boston culture. Changes in Cambridge are changes in Boston. For a ten or twenty year period there has been a determined and conscientious attempt across the Charles to break down the old barriers and traditions which kept Harvard from being democratic and efficient in the modern way. What has been accomplished in Cambridge is for the purposes of this article less important than what has been wrought in Boston. Undergraduates may take innovation lightly, but in the fastnesses of clubs upon Beacon Hill irate old gentlemen declare that Harvard is now nothing but a "slap-shoulder college," and younger philosophers of a more suavely cynical turn of mind deplore the out-Yaleing of Yale, and the rough, boyish virility, wholly unconnected with education, which, they maintain, now distinguishes Cambridge rather than New Haven. They tell you that "college spirit," with all its attendant vulgarities of tone, is rampant where

the college elms once stood, and there are no longer any disloyal sons of Harvard. This is the pleasant, crabbed, characteristic way in which Boston tells you that, after all, it is moving with the times, and that if a big, regenerative movement as some believe is sweeping over the country, it will have Harvard men in the very first battle-line. Boston may bewail changes in the nation, but it knows they cannot happen without changes in Harvard. Centuries of history prove it.

These centuries of history are singularly alive in Boston. The reference is not to Faneuil Hall or the Old South Church or any of the historic spots about which our modern Marco Paulos from Michigan and Oregon know so much. What is meant is the amazing sense of a continuous social connection back to the very English roots of the New England tree.

An unwise stranger, sitting at ease in the Somerset Club one day of this very year of grace, ventured the observation, not deeply original or stimulating, that Boston was remarkable for the way in which the old Bostonian families had kept the money and the position and were still, as it were, in the saddle. The Bostonians looked at one another. They murmured a negative, and the faintest trace of embarrassment seemed to creep over the group. The confused stranger was so sure that his remark, if banal, was true that he thought they had not understood. He carefully explained again. The negative was now sharper and the embarrassment deeper.

"I don't think you quite understand—" began one of the Bostonians; and it is possible that the miserable stranger might have tried to explain still again had not his friend gone on:

"You see there are almost no Bostonians living here"—he paused for an instant—"almost all the Bostonian families went back home at the time of the Revolution. The inhabitants here now, with the exception of perhaps four families, are all Salem people!"

There is no way of commenting upon such an episode; there it is, in sheer Bostonian beauty, for such as are worthy of seeing its Bostonianism. The tormented un-Bostonian mind will possibly seek refuge in the thought of the club itself. (One does not say clubs, although it is just possible to maintain that there are two in Boston.) Its grave, suave distinction can only be savored by many visits and by quiet, meditative hours. But once you have felt its charm you will henceforth find the ordinary American organization more like a hotel or a railway station than like a club. To sign no checks, but instead to receive an unobtrusive and unitemized bill at the end of the month, is at once to gain the impression that you are being

notably treated like a gentleman. The impression is deepened by genuine blue Canton ware, by waiters of a dignified and ancient kindness which has elsewhere disappeared from American life, and by food excellent in that strange, tempered New England way—oysters from the club's own planted waters, and peppers and pepper sauces dated and labeled like vintage wines.

The right to belong to such a club is, as it were, beyond the power of the mere individual to acquire—it is something with or without which he is born. The club, indeed, has been described as an “Institution for the Congenitally Eminent.” But within its doors you catch furtive hints of an inaccessible inner eminence—caused possibly by Bostonian instead of Salem descent—which makes even its exclusiveness seem common. There is a fabulous story of an eighth-degree Bostonian who referred lightly to his rare visits to this holy of club holies, of which he was, as it were automatically, a member, and said that it was “at times a pleasure to be *franchement canaille*.” In this wind-swept Northern clime the phrase in the French language somehow seems to accentuate the odd, bitter, cultivated venom of a description of the greatest Bostonian exclusiveness as “frankly of the gutter.” Let Ohio and Oklahoma pause and think before they too quickly describe our American civilization as twentieth-century democracy.

Bostonian democracy is not the spontaneous product of naturally genial temperaments; it is rather a thing extorted from oneself by will and fierce conviction. But will, belief, and a conscience can make the Northern city burst into flames. In Boston least of anywhere in the North does the passion for human freedom which brought on our own Civil War seem a dead or forgotten thing. And even now the black brother—though modern thought judges him to be not quite a brother in the old sense—can still count on a helping hand and some belief in his future. It is well for the visitor to Boston to sit for a peaceful half-hour under the elms of the Common and think of New England's part in the national life. Geographically and spiritually New England is a little apart. It is a tight, small province, and it is a long way from there to Washington in ordinary times. It is in the crises that Boston becomes most intensely American; then you realize how far-flung is the battle-line of the New England conscience. One never quite forgets in Boston the great moments in our history when the country has kindled at New England's burning heart.

Modern workers, who believe that charity and good deeds begin at home, sometimes scoff at the Bostonian “long-distance philan-

thropy." And they cite you the story of the lady found wildly weeping because she had just heard how cruel they were to cats in Persia in the thirteenth century! She is indeed a shade fantastical, poor lady; but in the monotonous dead levels of American life we can be grateful to Boston for her.

Indeed, is not gratitude, after all, the chief feeling one has for Boston? Nipped and sour though the fruit sometimes may be of the tree which grows upon her thin soil in her bitter east wind, does not every descendant of the old American stock, and every one who has in his Americanization made the traditions of that stock his own, know that the core of that fruit is sound, and the cider that might be pressed from it the best of our native wines, if one may put it that way? The packed trains that carry Thanksgiving travelers to Boston seem somehow symbolic. The statistics are not at hand—when are statistics ever at hand when they are needed?—but it must be that these trains are more heavily freighted than those that go to any other of our great American cities. Whether we are from New England or not, Boston is for many of us, in a deeper sense, our "home town."

*Harper's Magazine, January, 1916*

# Strike!

WILLIAM ROLLINS, JR.

Micky stood at her bench, her hands ready. With lowered head she watched Ramon at the front of the room, his fingers on the switch, his eyes on the clock.

Seventhirty. He threw down the switch—

Clamp them on; snap them off; UP; down. UP and down. She saw him run up the three steps, push through the doors and disappear; she snapped one on; snapped another on. *Ramon*, she whispered. Her head was lowered between upraised moving arms to hide her eyes.

He was probably in Watkins' office now, sitting on her desk, swinging his legs, "Micky?" he'll be saying, "You mean Micky Bonner? oh, she's alright; and as I was saying—" Only that lady didn't come to work until nine o'clock. She raised her eyes to her spindles; her tightpressed lips quivered as she clamped a bobbin on, snapped one off, thinking of him up there, leaving her here in the darkness of the sunlit room, in the silence of the clamp, clamp, girls, girls, snapping them off, clamping them on—But she'd pay him back! A wave of anger swept her, and she glared at the closed doors; he could talk to Watkins all he wanted to, and then he'd turn around and find he was boss of an empty room; *in just a couple of hours!* she exalted . . . and then she was limp, snapping a bobbin off. She gazed at her bench with a chuckle, half a whimper; what difference would it make to him what *she* did?

She snapped a bobbin off, and thought of that cottage just out of town on the little hill back from the road. They had walked out that way one sunny Sunday, and Ramon, seeing the *for rent* sign, suddenly pulled her up the path. He didn't say a word; just grinned, his eyes shining; and they stood at the foot of the steps talking to the old Italian with the tight collar and unbuttoned black vest; talking to him, arm in arm, like an engaged couple.

"Look at that grapevine, Micky!" Ramon pointed to the vine-covered terrace and swung around to her. "See?" His eyes were so eager! "You can make the wine, and we can sit out and have supper there after I get home from work" . . . And then there was that time just after she met him.

She thought of him only as a nice Portugee kid then; and they

were walking through the shortcut, up to the highroad, home, swishing through the dead autumn leaves. He was behind her, talking; and all at once he grabbed her arm and swung her around.

"I'm in love with you," he said, and his eyes were terribly intent; "you're more than a sister to me, you're more than my own mother!" Seeing her amazement, he stamped impatiently. "You understand?" he cried.

She blinked the tears away, giggling at the memory, snapping a bobbin off, snapping another off. Moving her hands up and down, she stared at the closed door above the three steps; and an emptiness gnawed at her, so that she felt dizzy in the swirling, clashing, shouting. The room was a sweep of dead gray, spotted black by the machines, the noises; the world beyond was dead gray, stretching on, without one break, one hope. She had to cry out (she snapped a bobbin off), she had to run to him, throw herself on her knees, Ramon, *Ramon*—

"Well, are you all set?"

Marvin was grinning there beside her. She grinned back as her fingers played along the spindles.

"All set." She cleared her throat. "Yeh."

"All the girls going out?"

"All the ones I dared talk to. I ain't had a chance to talk to them today."

"Better get them ready. The committee in this building's going to meet just outside of Thayer's office. Eleventhirty sharp, you know." He winked back at her as he walked up the aisle, toward the doors.

And slowly, as she watched him go, as her fingers mechanically played up and down, a new feeling was born in her.

She felt it grow. Surprised, a little unsure at first, she stood very still (save for her moving hands). She felt it spread warmly inside her, she knew very consciously when it rose to flicker in her eyes. It was something new; not like love, cloying, fearful, heart-rending; it was fresh, clear, like cold air deep in her lungs, it was overwhelming, pitiless, like the triumphant march of an unvanquished army, like the rise to crescendo of drums and bagpipes! it was vast, it was as dazzlingly bright as the pain had been dark, it was one word:  
**STRIKE!**

She laughed in surprise. She looked at the closed doors, and for the first time her hands stopped their mechanical motion. She thought of Ramon, sitting on Miss Watkins' desk, dangling his legs, and she laughed with conscious wistfulness, as one should be wistful about the dead. "Ramon," she whispered, tempting, challenging,

the old love. She looked at the bobbin in her hand, then slung it on the bench.

She crossed to the girls on the other side of the aisle.

Clamp them on: snap them off . . .

The sound, muffled by the closed doors of the mill rooms and his office, seeped into Thayer, an overtone to his conversations, his work, his thoughts. Like the rhythm of his pumping blood, the rhythm of his respiration, came this dull sullen rhythm, unnoticed, but life-sustaining; and when it stopped, as when his breathing and his heart stopped, that would be the end. But there would be no end.

“Miss Watkins.” His voice was low; he did not turn.

Miss Watkins glanced around, her fingers motionless above the typewriter. She waited, eyebrows respectfully raised.

“Has there been . . . have you heard any complaints about the cut?”

“No, sir, I haven’t.”

He nodded slowly to the clock.

“There’s probably . . . a little discontent, though . . .” He turned slightly, looked now at the wall calendar; “lowering their income like that?”

“Yes sir . . . Still, the cut wasn’t very large, sir.”

He nodded imperceptibly to the calendar; turned back to the clock. Miss Watkins waited, fingers suspended.

Clamp them on; snap them off—. She turned back to her machine: *tickatacktickatack, tickatacktickatack . . .*

A moment longer Thayer stared at the clock, then he took up his pen, and recommended his listing of the production for the week of the 26th.

In 1637, William Thayer, with his wife, Hannabel (Smith) landed in Salem. Through a bitter cold winter, they cut down the trees, husband and wife along with their neighbors; they trimmed the logs and built their cabin. They built a city by the power of their muscles, the swing of their arms, saw it slowly rise into a community of comfort; and William Thayer’s sons moved on, hewed their way westward through a forest wilderness and a race of savages. They moved on again two generations later, leaving towns, villages, behind them: Fitchburg, Deerfield. They moved west, then up into Vermont. They fought off the Indians and the French, and then the Indians and the British; they were carpenters, builders; and then, their building done, millers, wheelwrights, tradesmen, in their solidly bitterly, built communities . . . and sipping their scarlet wine in cafés, lolling beneath cool arbors or on sunwarmed meadows,

in Portugal, Sicily, the African islands, these people lazed away their lives, soft guitars strumming, indolent voices calling across the still blue waters of the Mediterranean and South Atlantic; (he drew a block of paper toward him to commence his report;) *and now they're discontented!*

His head jerked up.

Oh, yes, they're discontented, all right, when they find themselves suddenly halted in their easygoing joyride! He smiled, tightlipped, at the clock and a shiver passed over him. They come here soft, flabby, to the Land of Plenty, made plentiful by lean hard labor— (he looked at his clenched fist; why, that could knock out any of them!) They play around, tail around, while we work, work, pull— (his muscular neck tightened against his stiff collar;) and then they're discontented, they stick out their hands for more of our sweat money, and get it, GET IT, THE GODDAMNED—

Cut it.

His hand, clutching the pen, trembled.

Stop. Relax, like Doc said.

He slumped in his chair, mouth fallen open, hands carefully limp. He waited a half minute, watching the clock . . . and then he drew himself up, stomach in, tight, solid, his collar gripping his firm neck. He pulled in his belt, sensing his slimness. He leaned over his work.

Spinningroom. Production for the week of July 5th. Frame No. I . . .

But this may be the beginning of rejuvenation. All over the country wages are being lowered, and once again America will start at rock bottom and build itself up, slowly, solidly, giving the best in brain and brawn, and receiving in exchange the coin merited. I am worth, in the coin of the nation, so much per hour, so many days in the year; I am higher in the scale than they because I have proven by intelligence and diligence I am worth just so much more, as Ramon is worth more—and do they think they can slobber along and keep up with him do they think they can fool around loaf grow fat and make his intelligence and hard work show for nothing, well by Christ they can't, we'll show them, I'll by GOD I'LL—. He checked himself; held his mind suspended.

Clamp them on; snap them off; clamp them on; snap them off.

Quieted, he glanced at the clock.

"Tenthirty, Miss Watkins."

"Yes, sir. I just noticed it." She rose, went to the window and opened it. Dark windclouds were crossing the sky, the wind rushed

in, and she contracted against it. She turned and waited until Thayer reached her side, and they both faced the gray sky above the tenements across the court. Miss Watkins, shivering in the cold air, jerked in her chin, threw out her stomach, and with noisy breaths, flapped her outstretched arms, up and down, up, down, dispiritedly, eyeing darkly the windowframe.

But Thayer's eyes glittered. He smiled grimly as he felt the keen air cut into his lungs, searching out and purifying his whole body. He felt his muscles ache, pressed back his shoulders and neck until it was nearly unbearable; and held them there. He pulled at his belt, but there were no more notches. (Have to cut another.) For five minutes he stood, stretching every muscle, his toes, legs, thighs, one after another, until he reached his head; he worked his jaw and even his eyebrows. Then he turned back to his seat.

The window slammed down and Miss Watkins returned to her desk, blowing on her fingers.

"Feel a million times better now," murmured Thayer.

"Yes, sir; one feels refreshed," she replied, sitting on her hands.

He took up his pen, rubbed it along his lips, gazing at the wall. But against his will he peered at her, sitting there on her hands.

Warm there; almost touching. But she's not thinking about it, not conscious what it means to me. He turned back. Pure girl, untouched, unbroken—clothes stained with hot acrid blood—. He stood up.

He loosened his belt, crossing to the window, where he stared down at the gray windswept court.

The door noiselessly opened (*clamp them on; snap—*) and shut again, and Thayer looked up. Ramon was standing there, his eyes uneasy.

He smiled to the young man; fresh, cleanlimbed, no sex business. "Good morning, Ramon!"

Ramon smiled back.

"Good morning sir." He glanced at Miss Watkins. "Good morning," he murmured.

She looked up brightly. "Good morning, Ramon." *Tickatactack-tack, tickatactack-tack*. Thayer leaned back.

"Well, what's new, young man?"

Ramon's smile faded. He glanced at his foot and up again.

"I guess they're sort of sore, sir," he said in lowered voice. "About the cut." He jerked back his head in the direction of the muffled rumble.

Thayer's smile did not disappear; it tightened. He watched Ramon with sharp humorous eyes.

"They are, are they?" he asked, slowly. "But I guess we're ready for them, hey, Ramon?"

Ramon looked down again, kicking at the floor.

"Oh, they're just shooting their fac—just talking, that's all," he murmured.

"Yes, but . . . if they start anything, Ramon . . ." He waited for Ramon to look up; Ramon looked up; "we're ready for them, you and I. Hah?"

Ramon still kicked at the floor; but his eyes were caught by his boss's. He forced a flickering smile.

"Yes, sir . . ." he said in a low voice.

Clamp them on; snap them off . . .

and clamp them on and snap them off and clamp them on and snap them off—

First to those beside her she talked with lowered voice; and then to those beyond. The girls she talked with gathered in a huddle, whispering when she left them, leaving their spindles darting up and down; UP, down.

Clamp them on and snap them off and clamp them on and snap them off—

The second watched her furtively, and then found business somewhere else. And she circled wider; leaving behind small groups of girls, whispering, murmuring, grumbling; clamp them on and snap them off—. She watched the clock.

And at last she started up the aisle, up the steps; turned, grinned, with a farewell wave to the girls below who all stood along the aisles with no one now at "their" machines, that worked alone, UP and down; with no one there to clamp them on and snap them off and clamp—

She banged open the doors, leaving them open. Three boys, committeemembers, were coming quietly up the corridor; and then she saw Doucet come out of the spinningroom, leaving those doors open too. She waited for them, giggling, while they grinned sheepishly back; and hearts pounding, without a word, they continued along the corridor; halting in silence at the foot of the stairs for the two young men and the girl who came noiselessly down to join them.

*Clamp them on; snap them off . . .*

Louder, now that the mill room doors were open, came the rumble to the three people in Thayer's office.

*Clamp them on; snap them off . . .*

Silent, ears alert, Miss Watkins' fingers held motionless above the keyboard, they listened to the footsteps that came hesitating up the corridor. Thayer half rose. Then he sank back and lifted his telephone receiver.

"Mr. Holbrook," he said in a low voice into the mouthpiece. He gazed at the bare floor, feeling the two faces watching him. *Clamp them on; snap them off; clamp them on—*; he turned back to the mouthpiece.

"Holbrook? Thayer." His voice was quiet. "Any trouble in your building? . . . Little uneasiness here . . . No; paying no attention to it unless they force—what? The final decision, hah? No conference, no nothing?" A slit of a smile spread on his lips. "Good! . . . Oh, it'll be all right, I'm not worrying . . . Yeah . . . See you later." He put down the receiver and looked at Ramon, still smiling.

"The cut is the final decision of Mr. Baumann and the directors," he said. "No conference, no nothing. Take it or leave it." Ramon looked down at his wriggling foot.

Clamp them on; snap them off; clamp them on; snap them off. The footsteps had halted outside the door. Now there was a knock.

"Come in!" The door opened.

CLAMP THEM ON; SNAP THEM OFF; CLAMP THEM ON; SNAP THEM OFF.

Six men and two girls pushed in and huddled near the open door. Most of them looked uneasily at Thayer, and then dropped their eyes under his direct cold gaze; all save Doucet and Micky. Doucet's grin was selfconscious, but his blue eyes were as hard as the superintendent's as he returned his gaze. Wondering, pitying, Micky regarded Ramon who had eased back against the wall, kicking his heel against it and looking down.

CLAMP THEM ON; SNAP THEM OFF; CLAMP THEM ON; SNAP THEM OFF.

"You wanted to see me?"

A silence; then a low hissing *yessir*, scarcely audible.

"And you left your machines running to do it?"

Micky swung around to him.

"It's the sectionhand's job to turn them off," she snapped; "and he wasn't there." Her eyes shone, her face was tense with conscious triumph. Ramon cleared his throat.

"I'll go turn—"

"*Ramon!*" Thayer waved his hands, his eyes on the committee. Ramon, who had stood upright, again slouched back. "It's the section-

hand's job," said Thayer, evenly, "to turn them on at seven-thirty in the morning, and again at one in the afternoon; and to turn them off at noon and at five-thirty. No other time. And it's your jobs to stay by them and work them, the men in their rooms as well as the girls in Ramon's."

"It's our job to stay by them, is it, after you cutting us ten percent, and you and Ramon hanging around here leading the life of Riley!"

"Aw, Micky . . ."

Thayer looked down at his carefully drumming fingers, then up again.

"I'm not used to having the hands talk to me in that fashion, young lady," he said slowly; "however, if you—"

"Then lead us to somebody what is! That's what we've come here for like the committees in the other buildings!"

"—however, if you have any complaint to make, I will hear it and see what can be done about it."

"Complaint to make! We ain't making no complaint!" she cried, glaring at him and feeling her passionate voice batter the helpless boy against the wall; "we're just here demanding what's ours, and then you bosses here can take the gravy and wallow to your necks in it, it's nothing to me, I ain't in your class! I'm just after what's coming to me, and so are the rest of us!"

"Aw, Micky . . ." Ramon looked up, to see Doucet's cold eyes turned on him. Sullenly, he tried to return the gaze, and then looked down again. I'll murder you, you bastard, he thought.

Thayer was tapping his pen, slowly and thoughtfully, on his desk. Now, smiling, he looked up at Micky.

"You're going to get what's coming to you, young lady." He dipped his pen in the ink and drew a pad toward him. "What is the young lady's name, Ramon?" he asked, his pen poised.

Ramon's heel, about to tap the wall, stopped short. He glanced swiftly up at Micky. Micky was smiling; her triumphant eyes were like needles in his. He dropped his eyes.

"Ramon? I asked you . . ."

"Kathleen Bonner . . ." he murmured.

"Kath—You spell it with a K?" Thayer politely asked her.

"I spell it with a K. K-A-T-H-L-E-E-N! and C-A-T, CAT!"

"Yes . . . thank you." He was writing, "and d-o-g, dog. Kathleen, Bon-ner . . . Well Miss Bonner." He looked up. "You won't have any more cause for complaint about wages in the Baumann-Jones Mill after today. If you will see the paymaster on your way out." Avoiding Doucet's gaze, leveled again on him, he turned to the group

huddled behind Micky. "And is there anything I can do for you?" he asked.

Micky turned to look at them. They looked at her, at one another, glanced at Thayer from the corner of their eyes. Her hands rose to her hips; she tapped her foot, holding herself in.

"Nothing at all, gentlemen?"

Silence; while Micky waited. The other girl wet her lips; then closed her mouth again.

"WELL? Why don't you open your face, you poor fishes, what do you suppose God gave you a tongue for?"

"You know what He gave it for, don't you, young lady?" Thayer said pleasantly.

"Damn right and I do—WELL?"

Doucet, suddenly aware, glanced at her, and then stepped quietly forward. But Thayer held up his hand.

"Before you speak, however," he said, "I might as well tell you it's a waste of time talking about the wagecut. I've just received notification that it's the final decision of Mr. Baumann and the directors. No conferences; no anything at all. I'm afraid you must take it, or—like this young lady—leave it."

Doucet turned questioningly to the others. Thayer's face tightened.

"There's no need of conferring here—or anywhere. Take it or leave it—And if you don't like it, if you want higher wages, get to work, use a little elbow grease *and a little gray* MATTER AND—" His mouth clamped shut; he looked down at his desk.

"Well?" Micky turned to the group behind her. "You heard what he said, didn't you?" A grin flickered beneath her glaring eyes.

They looked quickly at one another; nodded to her. Doucet herded them out the door.

At the threshold Micky turned back.

"Goodbye to you, Mr. Thayer," she said, her eyes shining; "and I'm thinking the Baumann-Jones Mill won't have to worry about paying the hands for a while yet! And goodbye to you, Mr.—" She stopped as she saw the lonely figure slouched against the wall, wistful eyes on her. "And you won't come along with the crowd, Ramon?" she asked, softly.

He looked down; kicked back at the wall. Thayer's face hardened.

"Well, Ramon?"

"Yes, sir—I—" He looked up at Micky. "I guess I'll stay here, Micky," he said.

They hurried back down the corridor, their feet clattering now, their voices sharp, excited. As they passed the windingroom, the girls

were bunched at the opened doors; their machines were turned off. "Come on!" called the committee; "everybody out to the court!" The girls' hushed voices leaped shrilly. Shouting, chattering, laughing, they fell in behind. The men from the spinningroom joined them; from the weavingroom. They came pouring down from the third and fourth floors where they had been eagerly waiting. The scuffle of their feet, their excited voices, vibrated hollowly in the machine-stilled silence. They went down the stairs, out to the court.

They were pouring out from the other doors. They closed in a tight mass in the center that widened, widened, as more and more poured out; until at last they filled the court, a dark, agitated, compact mass. They were like animals released from a cage, a little frightened in the unaccustomed freedom of the windy, cloud-darkened court, but exhilarated; laughing, punching, kidding, giddy; their voices, sharp, deep, or shrill, fused in a mighty rumble, to rise to the officials and office-workers watching in the windows above.

*"Fellow workers!"* The thin highpitched voice pierced the swollen rumble, rising faint but clear to the listeners behind the closed windows. The noise subsided. The crowd looked up, to see Marvin standing on a box in their middle. He waited, his hand upheld for silence.

*"Fellow workers,"* he commenced again; *"we've just come from the bosses. Our committees have gone to all the bosses in every building of the Baumann-Jones Mill. They went to them to ask them if we couldn't have a conference with them. Just a conference to talk over this wagecut they've given us. And do you know what they said?"*

*"They said there wouldn't be no conference. They said we could take the wagecut or leave it. They wouldn't talk to us. Kicked us out their offices and told us to go back to our looms and slave for them. They got to make sure of their dividends. To HELL if we starve. All right, fellow workers; are you going to take that lying down?"*

*"NO!"*

*"Are you going to take the wage cut, or leave it?"*

*"LEAVE IT!"*

*"All right, Come up here, Fellow Worker Thumado . . ."*

*"Fellows and Girls."*

*"I have been working at the Baumann-Jones Mill since before the War. I was making \$24 a week in 1921. Then they cut us four times: They cut us in 1924, cut us so I was only making \$19 a week. Then they cut us in 1926—all right, Marvin, I'm hurrying. Well, I'm only making \$11 now and I got a wife and two kids to feed. Is that fair?"*

*"NO!"*

*"I work like hell nine hours a day and my kids are hungry. And they live on the dividends what we make for them and they got automobiles and beautiful homes up on the hill. Is that fair?"*

"NO!"

*"All right. All right, Micky . . ."*

*"Fellows and girls, let's cut the talk. We didn't come out here to talk, did we?"*

"NO!"

*"We come out here because our bosses want to cut our wages what are too low already. We come out here because we tried to talk to them and they wouldn't talk to us. Allright, fellows and girls, there's just one thing we can do, and you know what it is. Are we going to do it, are we going to show them? What is it, fellows and girls?"*

A moment's dead silence. Then, with the fearful impact of the word itself:

"STRIKE!"

From up near the gate sounded a girl's clear voice.

*"C'est la lutte finale—"*

Immediately it was taken up in English by Marvin's original committee. A few old Portuguese followed; a halfdozen Poles.

*"Let each stand in his place . . ."*

It rose here and there in the crowd. In English, Portuguese, French, Greek, Polish. Some remembered it dimly from the past and hummed it; some followed and hummed it; everybody made some kind of sound. And it blended, rose to the listening watchers at the windows, to the lowhung clouds that scuttled darkly, silently by.

"THE INTERNATIONAL  
SHALL BE THE HUMAN RACE!"

They crowded through the gate, singing, yelling, whistling through their teeth. Someone jerked the watchman's cap over his nose, and when he raised it, another jerked it down, and then another jerked it down. They swept along the street behind their leaders, a dark formless unwieldy mob, fiercely exultant.

*The Shadow Before, 1934*

# *New England, There She Stands*

BERNARD DEVOTO

I

In August, 1927, I resigned my assistant professorship and undertook to support myself by what Ring Lardner has probably called the pen. Implicit in the change was a desire to live in some more agreeable community than the suburb of Chicago that had been my residence for five years. Since I carried my pen with me, I might live in any place on earth that pleased me. I might have gone to Montparnasse or Bloomsbury, Florence or the Riviera or Cornwall. I might, with respectable precedent, have chosen New Orleans or San Francisco. I might have selected one of the Westchester or Long Island towns in which writers are commoner than respectable men. I didn't. To the consternation of my friends, I came to Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The choice at once expelled me from a guild to which for eight or nine years I had impeccably belonged, that of the intellectuals who have right ideas about American life. For, of course, according to those right ideas, New England was a decadent civilization. It was no longer preëminent in America. Its economic leadership had failed so long ago that hardly a legend of it remained. Its intellectual leadership had expired not quite so early perhaps but, nevertheless, long, long ago. Its spiritual energy, never lovely but once formidable, had been degraded into sheer poison, leaving New England a province of repression, tyranny, and cowardice. At the very moment of my arrival Mr. Heywood Broun announced that all New England could not muster a half-dozen first-class minds. Mr. Waldo Frank had explained that nothing was left this people except the slag of Puritanism—gloom, envy, fear, frustration. He had explored the waste-land and discovered that practically all New England women suffered from neuroses (grounded in the Denial of Life) and contemplated suicide. Mr. Eugene O'Neill had dramatized a number of Mr. Frank's discoveries and had added incest to the Yankee heritage. In short, the guild had constructed another one of those logically invulnerable unities to the production of which it devotes its time. New England was a rubbish heap of burnt-out

energies, suppressed or frustrated instincts, bankrupt culture, social decay, and individual despair.

In the month of my arrival there was a vivid confirmation of these right ideas. At Charlestown two humble Italians were executed because the ruling class did not like their political beliefs. The Sacco-Vanzetti case completed the damnation of New England: the right ideas were vindicated. Well, it helped to focus my ideas about the society to which I was returning. Six years earlier I had served on a committee which solicited funds for their defense. I believed them innocent of the crimes for which they were executed, and I held that any pretense of fairness in their trials was absurd. But several inabilities cut me off from my fraternal deplorers of this judicial murder. For one thing, I was unable to feel surprise at the miscarriage of justice—unable to recall any system of society that had prevented it or to imagine any that would prevent it. I was unable to believe that any commonwealth was or could be much better constituted than New England for the amelioration of a class struggle. I was unable to believe that any order of society would alter anything but the terms in which social injustice expressed itself.

These inabilities added considerable force to my immediate, private reasons for desiring to live in New England. The private reasons were very simple: I wanted to use the Harvard College Library. I liked the way New Englanders leave you alone. I had lived in the West, the Middle West, the South, and New York, and knew that the precarious income of a writer would assure me more comfort, quiet, and decent dignity in New England than anywhere else in America. But these personal motives were buttressed by generalization. As the great case had shown, I profoundly disbelieved in the perfectibility of Society. Societies, I believed, would not become perfect and could not be made perfect. The most to be hoped for was that, as a resolution of imponderable forces, as an incidental by-product of temperaments and interests and accidents, a way of living in society might arise that was somewhat better than certain other ways. And, because I had lived in New England before, I knew that accidental by-products of the Yankee nature had given New England an attractive kind of civilization. I did not believe in the perfect state but, like Don Marquis, I knew something about the almost-perfect state. It had somehow begun to be approximated in New England.

Two simple facts had conditioned it. For one thing, as my former union announced, leadership had departed from New England forever. That meant, among many other things, that the province

was delivered from a great deal of noise and stench and common obscenity which are inseparable from leadership in America. It meant that the province was withdrawn from competition; and this implied a vast amount of relief, decency, and ease. But there was something more. In that fall of 1927 Mr. Ford Madox Ford was writing a book whose title expressed the hopefulness of hundreds of thousands of Kansans, Texans, and Californians, *New York Is Not America*. Maybe it isn't; as an apprentice Yankee I am not interested. What has been important in the development of the almost-perfect state is that New England is not America. The road it chose to follow, from the beginning, diverged from the highway of American progress. By voluntary act the Yankee, whose ancestral religion was based on the depravity of human nature, refrained from a good deal that has become indispensable and coercive in America. Thus delivered and refraining, there was space for New England to develop the equilibrium whose accidents had produced a species of almost-perfect state.

So Mr. Mencken's laboriously assembled statistics have recently made clear various superficial ways in which the burnt-out, frustrated, and neurotic province must be called the foremost civilization in These States. And as I write, Mr. Allen Tate has just explained a difference, not quite clear to me, between regionalism and sectionalism. I do not quite understand the difference, but I do make out that it's now orthodox and even virtuous to be sectional. . . . I am encouraged to apply for a union card. The Yankees and I seem to be in good standing again.

## II

In New England the mills idled and passed their dividends. The four-per-cents decayed. The trust funds melted. Outside, the American empire was conceived, was born, and attained its adolescence. Its goods and capital overspread the earth. Detroit was a holy city. The abolition of poverty drew near, and the empire's twilight flared in murky scarlet. Then it was October, 1929, and midnight. . . . Novel paragraphs worked their way into a press that had long ignored the section it now reported. Business was sick, but New England business, we heard, wasn't quite so sick. Panic possessed America, but New England wasn't quite so scared. The depression wasn't quite so bad in New England, despair wasn't quite so black, the nightmare was not quite so ghastly. What the press missed was its chance for a pretty study in comparatives. How, indeed, should hard times terrify New England? It had had hard times for sixty

years—in one way or another for three hundred years. It had had to find a way to endure a perpetual depression, and had found it. It began to look as though the bankrupt nation might learn something from New England.

Some time ago I drove over December roads to the village in northern Vermont where I spend my summers. Naturally, I called on Jason, who is my neighbor there. Evergreen boughs were piled as high as the windows outside his house; the first snow was on them, and its successors would make them an insulation that would be expensive in the city. Piles of maple and birch logs had grown up back of the shed; they would increase through early January, for they are the fuel that Jason burns all year round. Under the floor of another shed was a pit that held potatoes, cabbages, and beets. Emma, who is Jason's wife, had filled her pantry with jars of home-grown corn, string beans, carrots, and a little fruit. She was making bread and doughnuts when I arrived. We had them for dinner, with cabbage, some of the string beans, and a rabbit stew. Jason had shot a couple of rabbits, and Emma explained how welcome they were. They didn't get much meat, she said; the deer Jason killed a few weeks before had been a life-saver.

I stayed the night at Jason's, slept under a feather bed, ate a breakfast which included doughnuts and pumpkin pie, and came away with a dazed realization that I had visited a household which was wholly secure. There was no strain here; no one felt apprehensive of the future. Jason lives far below "the American standard," yet he lives in comfort and security. He is so little of an economic entity that he can hardly be classed as what the liberal journals call a peasant, yet more than any one else I know, he lives what those same periodicals call the good life. He has lived here for fifty years and his forebears for sixty more, coming from more southerly portions of Vermont where the breed had already spent a century. During that time the same liberty, tenacity, and success have formed a continuity of some importance.

Jason owns about seventy acres of hillside, sloping down to an exquisite lake. He considers that, in view of his improvements, he would have to get two thousand dollars for the place if he were to sell it. Part of it is pasture for his horse and cow. Part of it is garden; enormous labor forces the thin soil to produce the vegetables that Emma cans. The rest is woodlot, for fuel, and sugar bush, for Jason's one marketable crop. The maples produce, in syrup and sugar, an annual yield of from one hundred and fifty to two hundred dollars—about one half of all the cash that Jason handles in a year. A few

days of labor on the roads bring in a little more, and during the summer he does odd jobs for such aliens as I. His earnings and his one crop bring him perhaps four hundred dollars a year, seldom or never more, but frequently less. On such an income, less than a fifth of what Mr. Hoover's Department of Commerce estimated to be the minimum capable of supporting an American family, Jason has brought up his children in health, comfort, and contentment.

There are thousands like Jason on the hillside farms of Vermont, New Hampshire, and northwestern Massachusetts, and there have been for three centuries. They have never thrown themselves upon the charity of the nation. They have never assaulted Congress, demanding a place at the national trough. Wave after wave of clamor, prayer, and desperation has crossed the farmsteads of the midland, where the thinnest soil is forty feet deep and the climate will grow anything; but from this frigid north, this six-inch soil sifted among boulders, has come no screaming for relief. The breed has clung to its uplands, and solvency has been its righteousness and independence has been its pride. The uplands have kept their walls plumb, their barns painted, their farms unmortgaged. Somehow, out of nothing at all, they have taxed themselves for the invisible State. The district nurse makes her rounds. The town roads are hard. The white schoolhouse sends its products to the crossroads high school and on to the university. The inspector calls and tests the family cow; State bulletins reach the mailbox at the corner. The crippled and the superannuated are secure.

One of Mr. Mencken's incidental revelations provides a succinct, if vulgar, summary of the statistics that verify it: if you want to be listed in *Who's Who in America* your first step should be to get yourself born in Vermont, and three of the next five best birth-places are New England States. More briefly still: here are people who have mastered the conditions of their life. With natural resources the poorest in the Union, with an economic system incapable of exploitation, in a geography and climate that make necessary for survival the very extreme of effort, they have erected their State and made it lovely. They have forfeited the wealth and advertisement and glamorous turmoil of other sections, but they have preserved freedom and security. The basis is men who must make their way as individuals, but the communism of the poor exists also. If Jason falls ill he will be cared for; if his one crop fails his neighbors will find food for his family; if he dies his widow (who will never be a pauper) will find the town putting at her disposal a means of making her way. . . . I cannot imagine a change in the

social order that would much alter this way of life. I cannot imagine a perfected state that could improve upon it.

These were hard times, I said to Jason. He agreed, ramming cheap tobacco into his corncob pipe. Yes, hard times. Nothing to do, though, but pull up your belt and hang on. Some folks thought it might be good to move ten or fifteen miles north, over the line into Canady. But on the whole, no—not for Jason. He and his pa had made a living from this place for seventy years. There'd been a lot of hard times in seventy years. He couldn't remember any times that hadn't been hard. He went into a discussion of Congress, so much more intelligent, so much less deluded by wishfulness than those I listen to in literary speakeasies in New York. This lapsed, and he began to talk at his ease, with the undeluded humor of his breed. It is the oldest humor in America, a realism born of the granite hills, a rock-bottom wisdom. He was an un-American anomaly as 1931 drifted to its close in panic and despair—a free man, self-reliant, sure of his world, unfrightened by the future.

He has what America, in our time and most of its past, has tragically lacked—he has the sense of reality. The buffalo coat he wore when we looked at his sugar bush is in its third generation in his family, having had I do not know how many owners before it strangely reached New England from the plains. I do not know how long it is since Emma bought a union suit, but I am sure that need dictated its purchase, not fashion or advertising. Here are rag rugs she has made from garments whose other usefulness was ended; here are carpets that were nailed long years on her grandmother's floor. The pans above her sink date from no ascertainable period; she and her daughters will use them a long time yet, and no salesman will ever bring color into her kitchen. Jason has patched and varnished this rocker, and Emma has renewed its cushions innumerable times. The trademark on Jason's wagon is that of a factory which has not existed for forty years. Jason does not know how many shafts he has made for it; he has patched the bed, bent iron for the running gear, set new tires on the wheels perhaps ten times. Now he contemplates putting the bed and shafts on the frame of an old Ford and will move his loads on rubber tires.

A squalid picture, a summary of penny-pinching poverty that degrades the human spirit? Not unless you have been victimized by what has never deluded Jason and Vermont. To this breed, goods, wares, chattels, the products of the industrial age, have been instrumentalities of living, not life itself. Goods are something which are

to be used; they are not the measure of happiness and success. While America has roared through a prosperity based on a conception of goods as wealth-begetting waste, while it has pricked itself to an accelerating consumption that has progressively lowered quality, while its solvency has depended on a geometrical progression of these evils, the granite uplands have enforced a different standard on their inhabitants. Debts, these farmers know, must eventually be settled. It would be pleasant to wear silk stockings, but it is better to pay your taxes. It would be nice to substitute a new car for the 1922 model that came here at third hand, but it is better to be free of chattel mortgages. It would be nice to have steak for supper and go to Lyndonville for the movie. But at four hundred a year and with the granite knowledge that one must not live beyond one's means—well, rabbits are good food, and from this cannily sited kitchen window sunset over the lake is good to look at.

Neatness, my guild assures us, proceeds from a most repulsive subliminal guilt. Maybe; but these white farmhouses with their scrubbed and polished interiors are very lovely. Also the peasants are the enemies of beauty in our day, but somehow their houses invariably stand where the hills pull together in natural composition and a vista carries the eye onward past the lake. Their ancestral religion told them that the world is a battleground whereon mankind is sentenced to defeat—an idea not inappropriate to the granite against which they must make their way. By the granite they have lived for three centuries, tightening their belts and hanging on, by the sense of what is real. They are the base of the Yankee commonwealth, and America, staring apprehensively through fog that may not lift in this generation, may find their knowledge of hard things more than a little useful.

### III

Since we do not believe in perfect states or in the beautiful simplicities, composed by right ideas, it would be silly to expect the Yankee to be a complete realist. He has ideas about himself which are almost as romantic as those the intellectuals have developed about him. He considers himself a cool, reticent person, dwelling in iron restraint, sparse of speech, intensely self-controlled; whereas he has no reserve whatever, indulges his emotions as flagrantly as a movie queen, and at every level, from the upland farms to the Beacon Street clubs, talks endlessly, shrilly, with a spring-flood garrulity that amazes and appalls this apprentice, who was born to the thrift of Rocky Mountain talk. He thinks that his wealthy

burghers are an aristocracy, and the burghers, who share that illusion, consider their own mulishness a reasoned, enlightened conservatism of great philosophical value to the State. He thinks that his bourgeoisie possesses a tradition of intelligence and a praiseworthy thirst for culture; whereas it has only a habit of joining societies and a masochistic pleasure in tormenting itself with bad music which it does not understand and worse books which it cannot approve. He thinks that he is set apart in lonely pride to guard the last pure blood in America; whereas he has absorbed and assimilated three-score immigrations in three centuries. Recognizing his social provinciality, he thinks that he is, nevertheless, an internationalist of the intellect; whereas his mind has an indurated parochialism that makes a Kansan's or a Virginian's seem cosmopolitan. That is what is important about his mind.

Nevertheless, he is fundamentally a realist, and these illusions are harmonious in the Yankee nature. Accidental by-products of that nature, of these qualities as well as more substantial ones, have produced the Yankee commonwealth, the almost-perfect state.

Let us begin with Cambridge's dead-end streets, which Mr. Lewis Mumford was recently commending. Mr. Mumford, who writes about the perfected municipalities of the future, had been looking at Brattle Street, Concord Avenue, and the little streets that wander off them but end without joining them together. He believes that cities must be planned so that quiet, safety, and seclusion will be assured their inhabitants. In the automobile age, highways must be constructed for through traffic, while the streets on which people live must receive only the necessary traffic of their own cars and those which make deliveries to their houses. Our little dead-end streets accomplish that purpose perfectly. They are safe and quiet, and they seem to Mr. Mumford a praiseworthy anticipation of the machine age. They aren't that, of course. Their landscaped crookedness represents the wanderings of Cambridge cows and the strife of Yankee heirs when estates were settled. They come to dead ends not because a prophet foresaw Henry Ford, but because some primordial Cambridge individualist put up a spite fence or fought a victorious court action against the condemnation of his property. Similarly, though modern highways allow locust-swarms of cars to approach Boston, its downtown streets will never experience Fifth Avenue's paralysis. Yankee mechanics, going homeward across marshes, laid them down; a convulsion of nature could not straighten or widen them, and accident anticipated Mr. Stuart

Chase's omnipotent engineer who would plan the almost-perfect city.

I cannot praise some aspects of the Yankee city. Such ulcerous growths of industrial New England as Lowell, Lawrence, Lynn, Pawtucket, Woonsocket, and Chelsea seem the products of nightmare. To spend a day in Fall River is to realize how limited were the imaginations of the poets who have described Hell. It is only when one remembers Newark, Syracuse, Pittsburgh, West Philadelphia, Gary, Hammond, Akron, and South Bend that this leprosy seems tolerable. The refuse of industrialism knows no sectional boundaries and is common to all America. It could be soundly argued that the New England débris is not so awful as that elsewhere—not so hideous as upper New Jersey or so terrifying as the New South. It could be shown that the feeble efforts of society to cope with this disease are not so feeble here as elsewhere. But realism has a sounder knowledge: industrial leadership has passed from New England, and its disease will wane. Lowell will slide into the Merrimack, and the salt marsh will once more cover Lynn—or nearly so. They will recede; the unpolluted sea air will blow over them, and the Yankee nature will reclaim its own.

But take the Yankee nature at a higher level—the sense of the community. I know a Middlewesterner who, graduating from medical school with distinction, came to Boston to study under a great surgeon. He has finished his work now and is going to begin practicing. He considered Chicago but has finally determined upon New York. The rewards of distinction are highest there. Not Boston—oh, not by any means. Boston fees are ridiculously small, and Boston specialists neglect to capitalize their skill. They waste time in free clinics, in research laboratories, on commissions for the investigation of poliomyelitis or rheumatic fever or cancer or glaucoma—all highly commendable for the undistinguished, the rank and file, but very foolish for the truly great, since they may treat millionaires. My friend will be, when his chief dies, America's leading surgeon in his specialty. So he goes to New York—and, I think, something about the Yankee commonwealth is implicit in that decision. . . . In Chicago a member of my family required the services of a specialist. The doctor grumbled about treating the family of a college teacher, whose trade proclaimed his income, but there was something about ethics and the Hippocratic oath and so he took the case. He did his work hastily, botched the job and, after inquiring the exact figures of my income, charged me one-fourth of a year's salary and said he would write off the rest to charity. So

in due time a Boston specialist had to do the job over again and spend more than a year in treatments which, because his predecessor had bungled, required close individual attention and the long, costly technic of the laboratory. His fee, though my income had quadrupled, was one-fifth of the Chicago man's and, because the case was a problem rather than a potential fee, he performed the cure. He had the obstinacy of Boston doctors, the conservative notion that medicine is a profession of healing and not an investment trust.

The Yankee doctors are citizens of the invisible state. The drug list of the Massachusetts General Hospital is about one-fourth as long as that of the Presbyterian Hospital in New York; medicine has its fads as often as architecture, and the Yankee mulishness avoids fads. But the researches go on, and students come from all over the world, and somehow these obstinate physicians fail to lose their preëminence though they lag mightily behind in the possession of Rolls-Royces. Citizenship shows up in them, and New England witnesses what America has not seen for a long time—the wrath of doctors, spoken in public places, against abuses. Yankee foresight carries them into the slums, where they lose money but forestall plague and, incidentally, relieve suffering. Yankee genialty makes them friends of their patients, and we of the little bourgeoisie find that the terror of disease is allayed for us so far as may be. . . . I smoke a cigarette with the pediatrician who, at five dollars instead of twenty-five, pays a monthly visit to my infant son. A problem in sociology receives its Yankee dismissal, and the pediatrician departs for the East End, where he manages a foundation that promotes the respectable adoption of foundlings. It keeps him from the golf course, and his waistline thickens; but he must maintain his citizenship in the Yankee commonwealth. Or my furnace man develops a queer pain, and I send him to the head physician of a great hospital. He is kept in an observation ward, where for some weeks all the resources of the laboratory are applied. Finally an operation is performed, and he goes to a camp in Maine to recuperate. No medical man receives a cent, and the hospital fees are paid from a fund created in 1842 to care for the moral welfare of canal-boat men. He will continue to tend furnaces for a long time yet. But what, I wonder, would be done for him in a perfect state—Mr. Swope's or Mr. Hoover's or Comrade Stalin's—that the almost-perfect state has failed to do?

It is this Yankee citizenship that has created, upon the granite base, the Yankee commonwealth. Our governments are corrupt—

not uniquely in America or history—but somehow they govern. Racketeers exist but somehow they do not take over our municipalities. Fortunes are made from city contracts, but somehow our garbage is collected and our streets are swept. Sojourn in Philadelphia or New York and then come back to Boston—see order in place of anarchy, clean brick and stone in place of grime, washed asphalt in place of offal. Babies starve in Yankee slums and rachitic children play round the statues of our great, but not so many nor so hopelessly. The citizens have no hope of perfection, and Mr. Hoover's abolition of poverty found few adherents among them; but, as Mr. Mencken's figures show, they have made the start. Something toward a solution of the problem of how to live in decent cities has been here worked out. . . . Another friend of mine, a lawyer, possesses a divided self that beautifully exhibits the Yankee commonwealth. Professionally he creates trusts for the protection of his clients' heirs, and conscientiously forbids the trustees to invest in the securities of Massachusetts corporations. State socialism, he is sure, has fatally encroached on their profits. Then, the business day over, he enthusiastically pursues his lifelong avocation—agitating for labor and pension laws that will more drastically cut down those profits. Clearly, this is not Utopia, but it is a citizenship, and it glances toward the almost-perfect state.

#### IV

Drive southeastward from the Vermont uplands toward Boston, through a countryside where the white steeples rise across the not accidental vistas of village greens. It is here that, while the empire roared away elsewhere, the Yankee learned the equilibrium of his estate. Here is the New England town, the creation of the Yankee nature, which exists as something the empire has forever passed by. There are no booms here. The huntsmen are up in Chicago, and they are already past to-day's high-pressure drive in Kansas City, but in New England who can ever share an expectation of bonanza again?

Here are the little mills that squatted beside a waterfall and for some generations sent out their trickles of stockings and percales. Manchester and New Bedford, Lowell and Lawrence absorbed them in the end, and now these places go down in turn before the New South. So the little mills closed up; shreds of belting hang from their pulleys, and bats emerge from windows that will never again be glazed. Dover is only a pleasant place which had an Indian attack once and has a handful of beautiful houses now. Orford

ships no products southward, but the loveliest mall in America drowns under its elms, undisturbed when the wind brings across the Connecticut the whistles of the railroad it would not suffer to cross its borders. The last tall masts have slipped out of Salem Harbor, and Hawthorne's ghost is more peaceful in the Custom House than ever those living ghosts were among whose dusty papers he found an initial bound with tarnished gold. Here are fifty inlets once resonant with hammers pounding good white oak, once uproarious when new vessels slipped down the ways. They are marshes now, and the high streets of Portsmouth and Newburyport remember a life once rich in the grain and wholly free of the repressions Puritans are supposed to have obeyed. And down their high streets will never come a procession of real estate men, promoters, financiers, and fly-by-nights.

America is rachitic with the disease of Bigness, but New England has built up immunity against the plague. It is impossible to imagine Concord tattooing its lowlands with white stakes, calling itself "Villa Superba: The Sunlight City of Happy Kiddies and Cheap Labor," and loosing a thousand rabid salesmen to barter lots on a Vista Paul Revere or a Boulevard de Ye Olde Inne to its own inhabitants or suckers making the grand tour. There have been factories, of a kind, at Easthampton and Deerfield for a hundred years, but their Chambers of Commerce will never defile their approaches with billboards inviting the manufacturer of dinguses to "locate here and grow up with the livest community in God's country." Pomfret or Tiverton or Pittsfield will never set itself a booster's ideal, "One Hundred Thousand by 1940." Bigness, growth, expansion, the doubling of last year's quota, the subdivision of this year's swamps, the running round in circles and yelling about Progress and the Future of Zenith—from these and from their catastrophic end, New England is delivered for all time.

Here, if you have a Buick income, you do not buy a Cadillac to keep your self-respect. You buy a Chevrolet and, uniquely in America, keep it year after year without hearing that thrift is a vice, a seditious, probably Soviet-inspired assault on the national honor. The superannuation of straight-eights and the shift from transparent velvet to suède lace are not imperatives. You paint the Bulfinch front; you do not tear it down. You have your shoes pegged while the uppers remain good. You patch the highway; you do not rip it out. . . . The town abides. No Traveler's Rest with an arcade of self-service hot dogs and powder puffs will ever be reared on the Common. The white steeple rises at the far end,

and the white houses of the little streets that lead into it are buried in syringa and forsythia, hollyhocks, Dorothy Perkinses, and the blooms of rock gardens. Soap, paint, and Yankee fanaticism have made an orderly loveliness not to be found elsewhere in America. The town is beautiful, and something more. Boys toss baseballs on the Common, infants tan themselves in safety, dogs conduct their tunneling and exploration. The Common and its tributary streets are quiet. Beneath the exterior, an efficient organization deals with the problems of the community; the townsman contributes his share but mainly he lives here, uncrowded. There is time; there is room; there is even, of a kind, peace. A society is here founded on granite. No one supposes it is perfect. It is not an experiment; it was not planned by enthusiasts or engineers or prophets of any kind. But out of the Yankee nature and the procession of blind force somehow dignity and community decency were here evolved.

The New England town, that is, has adjusted itself to the conditions of its life. It is a finished place. Concord was Concord when Newark was a pup, the song almost says; and Shirley will be Shirley when Great Neck is swallowed up. The butcher sells meat to his townsmen; he does not attempt exports to the Argentine. The turning-mill makes cupboards and cabinets for the local demand; it does not expand into the gadget business, and so throws no families on the town when next year's fashion demands gadgets of aluminum. Mr. Stuart Chase went to Mexico to find a community whose trades supported one another in something like security. He found it, but recorded his hope that some day the Mexicans would have dentists and bathtubs. In our imperfect way, we could have shown Mr. Chase his desire. The butcher's boy grows up to be a butcher, not a merchant prince; and meanwhile his teeth are taken care of and he bathes in porcelain, though while the white tub continues to hold water he will not bathe in something mauve or green that reproduces motifs from a Medici tomb. He has no hope of unearned increment when a hundred thousand shall have come to Shirley in 1940, but he has sunlight and clean air, quiet, a kind of safety, and leisure for his friends. You will not find him in Los Angeles—and the perfect state could offer him nothing that is denied him in Shirley.

New England is a finished place. Its destiny is that of Florence or Venice, not Milan, while the American empire careens onward toward its unpredicted end. The Yankee capitalist will continue to invest in that empire, while he can, so that the future will have its echoes from the past, and an occasional Union Stockyards, Bur-

lington, or United Fruit will demonstrate that his qualities are his own. But he, who once banked for the nation, will never bank for it again. The Yankee manufacturer will compete less and less with the empire. He will continue those specialties for which his skills and geography best fit him, but mainly he will be a part of his section's symbiosis. To find his market in his province, to sustain what sustains him, to desire little more, to expect even less—that is his necessity, but it implies the security of being able to look with indifference on the mirage that lures the empire on. The section becomes an economic system, a unity; it adjusts itself in terms of its own needs and powers.

The desire of growth and domination is removed from it—and with the desire is removed also their damnation. It will tranquilly, if aloofly, observe whatever America in the future does and becomes, but it is withdrawn from competition in that future. Almost alone in America, it has tradition, continuity. Not a tradition that every one can admire, not a continuity of perfection, but something fixed and permanent in the flux of change and drift. It is the first American section to be finished, to achieve stability in the conditions of its life. It is the first old civilization, the first permanent civilization in America.

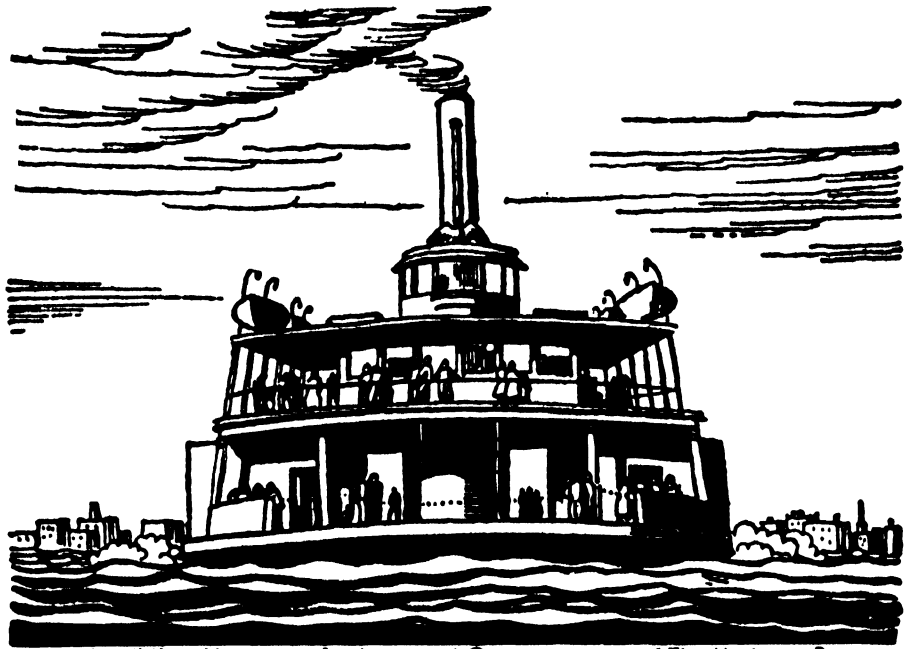
It will remain, of course, the place where America is educated, for the preëminence of its schools and colleges must increase with stability, and the place which America visits for recreation and for the intangible values of finished things. It will be the elder glory of America, free of smoke and clamor, to which the tourist comes to restore his spirit by experiencing quiet, ease, white steeples, and the release that withdrawal from an empire brings. It will be the marble pillars rising above the nation's port.

Or if not, if the world indeed faces into darkness, New England has the resources of the Yankee nature. They are not only the will to tighten one's belt and hang on. They contain the wisdom of three centuries whose teaching was, finally, defeat. They contain the dynamics of a religion which verified experience by proclaiming that man is depraved, that his ways are evil, and that his end must be eternal loss. Religion develops into the cynicism of proved things, and the Yankee has experienced nothing but what he was taught to expect. Out of this wisdom, in his frigid climate, against the resistance of his granite fields, he built his commonwealth. It was a superb equipment for his past; it may not be a futile one for our future.

*Forays and Rebuttals, 1936*



# The Mid-Atlantic States



Rockwell Kent Illustration for *Leaves of Grass*, courtesy of The Heritage Press



# Eastern Scenes

## 1. The Kaatskill Mountains

WASHINGTON IRVING

Whoever has made a voyage up the Hudson, must remember the Kaatskill mountains. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and lording it over the surrounding country. Every change of season, every change of weather, indeed every hour of the day produces some change in the magical hues and shapes of these mountains; and they are regarded by all the good wives, far and near, as perfect barometers. When the weather is fair and settled, they are clothed in blue and purple, and print their bold outlines on the clear evening sky; but sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of gray vapors about their summits, which, in the last rays of the setting sun, will glow and light up like a crown of glory.

*The Sketch Book*, 1820

## 2. Niagara

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

It was an afternoon of glorious sunshine, without a cloud, save those of the cataracts. I gained an insulated rock, and beheld a broad sheet of brilliant and unbroken foam, not shooting in a curved line from the top of the precipice, but falling headlong down from height to depth. A narrow stream diverged from the main branch, and hurried over the crag by a channel of its own, leaving a little pine-clad island and a streak of precipice between itself and the larger sheet. Below arose the mist, on which was painted a dazzling sunbow with two concentric shadows,—one, almost as perfect as the original brightness; and the other, drawn faintly round the broken edge of the cloud.

Still I had not half seen Niagara. Following the verge of the island, the path led me to the Horseshoe, where the . . . broad

[river], rushing along on a level with its banks, pours its whole breadth over a concave line of precipice, and thence pursues its course between lofty crags towards Ontario. A sort of bridge, two or three feet wide, stretches out along the edge of the descending sheet, and hangs upon the rising mist, as if that were the foundation of the frail structure. Here I stationed myself in the blast of wind, which the rushing river bore along with it. The bridge was tremulous beneath me, and marked the tremor of the solid earth. I looked along the whitening rapids, and endeavored to distinguish a mass of water far above the falls, to follow it to their verge, and go down with it, in fancy, to the abyss of clouds and storm. Casting my eyes across the river, and every side, I took in the whole scene at a glance, and tried to comprehend it in one vast idea. After an hour thus spent, I left the bridge, and, by a staircase, winding almost interminably round a post, descended to the base of the precipice. From that point, my path lay over slippery stones, and among great fragments of the cliff, to the edge of the cataract, where the wind at once enveloped me in spray, and perhaps dashed the rainbow round me. Were my long desires fulfilled? And had I seen Niagara?

Oh that I had never heard of Niagara till I beheld it! Blessed were the wanderers of old, who heard its deep roar, sounding through the woods, as the summons to an unknown wonder, and approached its awful brink, in all the freshness of native feeling. Had its own mysterious voice been the first to warn me of its existence, then, indeed, I might have knelt down and worshipped. But I had come thither, haunted with a vision of foam and fury, and dizzy cliffs, and an ocean tumbling down out of the sky,—a scene, in short, which nature had too much good taste and calm simplicity to realize. My mind had struggled to adapt these false conceptions to the reality, and finding the effort vain, a wretched sense of disappointment weighed me down. . . .

Gradually, and after much contemplation, I came to know, by my own feelings, that Niagara is indeed a wonder of the world, and not the less wonderful, because time and thought must be employed in comprehending it. Casting aside all preconceived notions, and preparation to be dire-struck or delighted, the beholder must stand beside it in the simplicity of his heart, suffering the mighty scene to work its own impression. Night after night, I dreamed of it, and was gladdened every morning by the consciousness of a growing capacity to enjoy it.

*The Dolliver Romance and Other Pieces, 1876*

### 3. Saratoga

HENRY JAMES

Its two main features are the two monster hotels which stand facing each other along a goodly portion of its course. One, I believe, is considered much better than the other,—less of a monster and more of a refuge,—but in appearance there is little choice between them. Both are immense brick structures, directly on the crowded, noisy street, with vast covered piazzas running along the facade, supported by great iron posts. The piazza of the Union Hotel, I have been repeatedly informed, is the largest “in the world.” There are a number of objects in Saratoga, by the way, which in their respective kinds are the finest in the world. One of these is Mr. John Morrissey’s casino. I bowed my head submissively to this statement, but privately I thought of the blue Mediterranean, and the little white promontory of Monaco, and the silver-gray verdure of olives, and the view across the outer sea toward the bosky cliffs of Italy. The Congress waters, too, it is well known, are excellent in the superlative degree; this I am perfectly willing to maintain.

The piazzas of these great hotels may very well be the biggest of all piazzas. They have not architectural beauty; but they doubtless serve their purpose—that of affording sitting-space in the open air to an immense number of persons. They are, of course, quite the best places to observe the Saratoga world. In the evening, when the “boarders” have all come forth and seated themselves in groups, or have begun to stroll in (not always, I regret to say, to the sad detriment of the dramatic interest, bisexual) couples, the big heterogeneous scene affords a great deal of entertainment. Seeing it for the first time, the observer is likely to assure himself that he has neglected an important item in the sum of American manners. The rough brick wall of the house, illumined by a line of flaring gas-lights, forms a natural background to the crude, impermanent, discordant tone of the assembly. In the larger of the two hotels, a series of long windows open into an immense parlour—the largest, I suppose, in the world, and the most scantily furnished in proportion to its size. A few dozen rocking-chairs, an equal number of small tables, tripods to the eternal ice-pitcher, serve chiefly to emphasize the vacuous grandeur of the spot. On the piazza, in the outer multitude, ladies largely prevail, both by numbers and (you are not slow to perceive) by distinction of appearance. The good

old times of Saratoga, I believe, as of the world in general, are rapidly passing away. The time was when it was the chosen resort of none but "nice people." At the present day, I hear it constantly affirmed, "the company is dreadfully mixed."

"Saratoga," *The Nation*, August 11, 1870

## 4. Dutch Barns

JOHN BURROUGHS

The Dutch took root at various points along the Hudson, and about Albany and in the Mohawk valley, and remnants of their rural and domestic architecture may still be seen in these sections of the State. A Dutch barn became proverbial. "As broad as a Dutch barn" was a phrase that, when applied to the person of a man or woman, left room for little more to be said. The main feature of these barns was their enormous expansion of roof. It was a comfort to look at them, they suggested such shelter and protection. The eaves were very low and the ridgepole very high. Long rafters and short posts gave them a quaint, short-waisted, grandmotherly look. They were nearly square, and stood very broad upon the ground. Their form was doubtless suggested by the damper climate of the Old World, where the grain and hay, instead of being packed in deep solid mows, used to be spread upon poles and exposed to the currents of air under the roof. Surface and not cubic capacity is more important in these matters in Holland than in this country. Our farmers have found that, in a climate where there is so much weather as with us, the less roof you have the better. Roofs will leak, and cured hay will keep sweet in a mow of any depth and size in our dry atmosphere.

The Dutch barn was the most picturesque barn that has been built, especially when thatched with straw, as they nearly all were, and forming one side of an inclosure of lower roofs or sheds also covered with straw, beneath which the cattle took refuge from the winter storms. Its immense, unpainted gable, cut with holes for the swallows, was like a section of a respectable-sized hill, and its roof like its slope. Its great doors always had a hood projecting over them, and the doors themselves were divided horizontally into upper and lower halves; the upper halves very frequently being left open,

through which you caught a glimpse of the mows of hay, or the twinkle of flails when the grain was being threshed. . . .

Then the great timbers of these barns . . . , hewn from maple or birch or oak trees from the primitive woods, and put in place by the combined strength of all the brawny arms in the neighborhood when the barn was raised,—timbers strong enough and heavy enough for docks and quays, and that have absorbed the odors of the hay and grain until they look ripe and mellow and full of the pleasing sentiment of the great, sturdy, bountiful interior! The “big beam” has become smooth and polished from the hay that has been pitched over it, and the sweaty, sturdy forms that have crossed it. One feels that he would like a piece of furniture—a chair, or a table, or a writing-desk, a bedstead, or a wainscoting—made from these long-seasoned, long-tried, richly-toned timbers of the old barn. But the smart-painted, natty barn that follows the humbler structure, with its glazed windows, its ornamented ventilator and gilded weather vane,—who cares to contemplate it?

“Picturesque Aspects of Farm Life in New York,” *Scribner’s Monthly*, November, 1878

## 5. Crossing Brooklyn Ferry

WALT WHITMAN

I too many and many a time crossed the river of old,  
Watched the Twelfth-month sea-gulls, saw them high in the air  
floating with motionless wings, oscillating their bodies,  
Saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their bodies and left  
the rest in strong shadow,  
Saw the slow-wheeling circles and the gradual edging toward the  
south,  
Saw the reflection of the summer sky in the water,  
Had my eyes dazzled by the shimmering track of beams,  
Looked at the fine centrifugal spokes of light round the shape of  
my head in the sunlit water,  
Looked on the haze on the hills southward and south-westward,  
Looked on the vapor as it flew in fleeces tinged with violet,  
Looked toward the lower bay to notice the vessels arriving,  
Saw their approach, saw aboard those that were near me,

Saw the white sails of schooners and sloops, saw the ships at anchor,  
The sailors at work in the rigging or out astride the spars,  
The round masts, the swinging motion of the hulls, the slender  
serpentine pennants,  
The large and small steamers in motion, the pilots in their pilot-  
houses,  
The white wake left by the passage, the quick tremulous whirl of  
the wheels,  
The flags of all nations, the falling of them at sunset,  
The scallop-edged waves in the twilight, the ladled cups, the frolic-  
some crests and glistening,  
The stretch afar growing dimmer and dimmer, the gray walls of  
the granite storehouses by the docks,  
On the river the shadowy group, the big steam-tug closely flanked  
on each side by the barges, the hay-boat, the belated lighter,  
On the neighboring shore the fires from the foundry chimneys burn-  
ing high and glaringly into the night,  
Casting their flicker of black contrasted with wild red and yellow  
light over the tops of houses, and down into the clefts of  
streets. . . .

*Leaves of Grass, 1881*

## 6. Mannahatta

WALT WHITMAN

I was asking for something specific and perfect for my city,  
Whereupon, lo! upsprang the aboriginal name!  
Now I see what there is in a name, a word, liquid, sane, unruly,  
musical, self-sufficient; .  
I see that the word of my city is that word up there,  
Because I see that word nested in nests of water-bays, superb, with  
tall and wonderful spires,  
Rich, hemm'd thick all around with sailships and steamships—an  
island sixteen miles long, solid-founded,  
Numberless crowded streets—high growths of iron, slender, strong,  
light, splendidly uprising toward clear skies;  
Tide swift and ample, well-loved by me, toward sundown,  
The flowing sea-currents, the little islands, larger adjoining islands,  
the heights, the villas,

The countless masts, the white shore-steamers, the lighters, the ferry-boats, the black sea-steamers well-model'd;  
The down-town streets, the jobbers' houses of business—the houses of business of the ship-merchants, and money-brokers—the river-streets;  
Immigrants arriving, fifteen or twenty thousand in a week;  
The carts hauling goods—the manly race of drivers of horses—the brown-faced sailors;  
The summer air, the bright sun shining, and the sailing clouds aloft;  
The winter snows, the sleigh-bells—the broken ice in the river, passing along, up or down, with the flood-tide or ebb-tide;  
The mechanics of the city, the masters, well-form'd, beautiful-faced, looking you straight in the eyes;  
Trottoirs throng'd—vehicles—Broadway—the women—the shops and shows,  
The parades, processions, bugles playing, flags flying, drums beating;  
A million people—manners free and superb—open voices—hospitality—the most courageous and friendly young men;  
The free city! no slaves! no owners of slaves!  
The beautiful city, the city of hurried and sparkling waters! the city of spires and masts!  
The city nested in bays! my city!  
The city of such women, I am mad to be with them! I will return after death to be with them!  
The city of such young men, I swear I cannot live happy, without I often go talk, walk, eat, drink, sleep, with them!

*Leaves of Grass, 1860*

## 7. The Night Hath a Thousand Eyes

JAMES HUNEKER

You see a cluster of lights on the West Side Circle, a ladder of fire the pivot. Farther down, theatreland dazzles with its tongues of flame. Across in the cool shadows are the level lines of twinkling points of the bridges. There is always the sense of waters not afar. All the hotels, from the Majestic to the Plaza, from the Biltmore to the Vanderbilt, are tier upon tier starry with illumination. Beyond the coppery gleam of the great erect synagogue in Fifth Avenue is the placid toy lake in the park. Fifth and Madison Avenues are

long shafts of bluish-white electric globes. The monoliths burn to a firegod, votive offerings. The park as if liquefied, flows in plastic rhythms, a lake of velvety foliage, a mezzotint of dark green dividing the east from the west. The dim, scattered plains of granite housetops are like a cemetery of titans. At night New York loses its New World aspect. Sudden furnace fires from tall chimneys leap from the Brooklyn or New Jersey shores; they are of purely commercial origin, yet you look for Whistler's rockets. Battery Park and the bay are positively operatic, the setting for some thrilling fairy spectacle. A lyric moonlight paves a path of tremulous silver along the water. From Morningside Drive you gaze across a sunken country of myriad lamps; on Riverside the panorama exalts. We are in a city exotic, semibarbaric, the fantasy of an Eastern sorcerer mad enough to evoke from immemorial seas a lost Atlantis.

*New Cosmopolis, 1915*

## 8. Rockefeller Center

HULBERT FOOTNER

In approaching Rockefeller Center on foot along the Avenue you see a row of smallish buildings of good design, with beautifully decorated doorways. Somebody had the inspiration to allot a unit to each of the most prominent foreign nations and to rent the space abroad. The idea was successful, and the French, British, Italian, and International Buildings are the result. . . . A wide walk lined with flowers . . . leads through to the central plaza where, seen between the low buildings, the naked tower salutes you with terrific effect. Surely this is good planning. If we must have towers, let them be stark and let them be sprung on us.

Seen from any angle, this tower is exciting. . . . Its shape, narrow and long, and the unrelieved gray stone give it ordinarily a somber look, like a royal catafalque carried high above the town; but I have seen it from the North River with a shaft of sunlight on it, all the rest of the city under a cloud, when it was like a shout. And once very late at night, walking along Forty-eighth Street with a friend talking about anything but great works, we glanced sideways and there it was, pulling us up short, its dark, proud shape blotting out the stars. That was something to remember.

*New York: City of Cities, 1937*

## 9. The Bowery

HULBERT FOOTNER

As for the Bowery, it looks much the same as it always did; the elevated tracks have been moved out into the middle of the street, that's all. Years ago there used to be a track running over each sidewalk, and the steam trains pounded above your head letting fall their little drops of oil or water. Modern improvement has skipped the Bowery; the same ugly little buildings defaced with the same cheap signs line both sides of the street, and much of the original flagstone paving remains. Nobody goes there any more for amusement; the dime museums, side shows, nickelodeons, auction sales have vanished. When the Bowery Theater burned down for the third time, it was not rebuilt and the charming old Atlantic Garden, next door, home of music and beer, is no more. The Bowery is a drab business street now, the center of the restaurant supply trade. . . .

All that remains of the old life are the flop-houses around Chatham Square and the bums. There are newer bum centers like Corlears Hook Park and "Scratch" Park up on the Harlem, but many of the old fellows cling to the Bowery for old times' sake. Bums never change their style; they look precisely as they looked in 1890. They still sway on the corners at mid-day, filthy, drunken, and unabashed, or retire into some nearby alley to sleep it off on the ground. It is in these alleys that their sudden, mysterious encounters take place, bloody but ineffectual. The bums constitute a race apart. In a way they are superior to the rest of us; a bum despises respectability, but where is the respectable man who has not at some moment or other longed to be a bum?

*New York: City of Cities, 1937*

## 10. Port of New York

PAUL ROSENFELD

The liners emerge from the lower bay. Up through the Narrows they heave their sharp prows. In sleety, in blue, in sullen weather, throughout the lighted hours, mouse-colored shapes are stretched

off Quarantine. Between cheesebox fort and fume of nondescript South Brooklyn waterfront, metal abdomens which were not seated there yesterday are submitted to rising concrete sides, masts, red iron, ferryslips. In New York harbor, always, new-come bodies foreign to it; issued from Southampton and Bergen, Gibraltar and Bremen, Naples and Antwerp; now engirdled by sullen shorelines and lapped by tired crisscrossed wavelets.

The lean voyagers steer under the tower-jumbled point of Manhattan. Flanks are lashed to the town; holds thrown open to the cobbled street. Decks are annexes of the littoral, a portion of New York no less than the leagues of "L" sweeping past dismal brick, over caverned thoroughfares. And through periods of many days, for weeks, even, the liners lie roped to their piersides, rows of captives handcuffed to policemen. The plated sides list obediently toward bald sheds. Only feeble brownish wisps of smoke adrift from silent smokestacks betray the incorporation incomplete. Then, one day, a pierside is found stripped. Next day, another; two. The vigilantes stand stupid. In the open quadrangle between docks, merely a dingy freighter, and small lighter-fry. By sea-coated piles, the muckerish North River water shrugs its shoulders. The liners have evaded; fled again through the straits. Beyond where eye can reach iron rumps dwindle down the ocean.

*Port of New York, 1924*

## 11. Coney Island

JAMES HUNEKER

Coney Island is only another name for topsyturvydom. There the true becomes the grotesque; the vision of a maniac. Else why those nerve-racking entertainments, ends of the world, creations, hells, heavens, fantastic trips to ugly lands, panoramas of sheer madness, flights through the air in boats, through water in sleds, on the earth in toy trains! Unreality is as greedily craved by the mob as alcohol by the dipsomaniac; indeed, the jumbled nightmares of a morphine eater are actually realised at Luna Park. Every angle reveals some new horror. Mechanical waterfalls, with women and children racing around curving, tumbling floods; elephants tramping ponderously through streets that are a bewildering muddle of many nations, many architectures; deeds of Western violence and robbery, illus-

trated with a realism that is positively enthralling; Japanese and Irish, Germans and Indians, Hindus and Italians, cats and girls and ponies and—the list sets whirring the wheels of the biggest of dictionaries.

In Dreamland there is a white tower that might rear itself in Seville and cause no comment. (This was so before fire destroyed the place.) Hemming it about are walls of monstrosities—laughable, shocking, sinister, and desperately depressing. In the centre flying boats cleave the air; from the top of a crimson lighthouse flat, sled-like barges plunge down a liquid railroad, while from every cavern issue screams of tortured and delighted humans and the hoarse barking of men with megaphones. They assault your ears with their invitations, protestations, and blasphemies. You are conjured to “go to Hell—gate”; you are singled out by some brawny individual with threatening intonations and bade enter the animal show where a lion or a tiger is warranted to claw a keeper at least once a day. The glare is appalling, the sky a metallic blue, the sun a slayer.

*New Cosmopolis, 1915*

## 12. Atlantic City at Night

JAMES HUNEKER

It is a picture for such different painters as Whistler or Toulouse-Lautrec, and it is a sight not duplicated on earth. Miles of glittering electric lamps light the Boardwalk. Even the dark spaces above the Pickle pier are now festooned with lace-like fire. It is a carnival of flame. You may start from the spot where in letters of fire you read, “Will you marry me?” near the Heinz pier, and with a book slowly walk for miles, perusing it all the while until you have passed the lower end of the walk, which recalls Coney Island, and finally touch the last wooden rail. Or, if you prefer riding, take one of those comfortable sedan-chairs and be wheeled by a dark lad for a small sum. The enormous amount of electricity consumed seems to make the air vital. Through these garlands of light moves a mob of well-behaved humans. The women are more mysterious than in the daytime. Everywhere you encounter the glances of countless eyes if you are still youthful. Evening toilets of the most dazzling kind assault your nerves. Wealth fairly envelops you. There is apparently no such thing as poverty or sickness in existence; the opti-

mistic exuberance of the American woman and man is seen here at its ripest. There is a suggestion of the overblown, of the snobbish, in this display, but I was not looking for the fly in the ointment, and so I enjoyed the picture as I should have enjoyed some gorgeous tableau in *Aïda* or *Salammbô*. It was as real. The love-birds kept up their whirring as from the lighthouse to the new pier the procession bubbled and boiled. No wonder Sarah Bernhardt exclaimed in her effusive manner that Atlantic City is unique. And she saw it in the winter-time.

*New Cosmopolis, 1915*

## 13. Wilmington

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

In my youth it was still a red-brick town with streets of cobble, through which horse cars bumped and rattled. Along one creek shore railroads and factories covered the old marshes and meadows, with here and there a fine gable of a settler's house unnoticed in the dirt and smoke. As the town grew it climbed. Walking uphill on Market Street was a progress through the history of American architecture, past dilapidated Colonial houses and really lovely banks and markets of the beginning of the century, to the Second Empire of the Grand Opera House, and the shapeless severity of the library and the one big hotel.

From the ballroom at the top of the Opera House where we went for dancing school there was a view of the whole town at once; and it always surprised me to see how deeply its criss-cross of streets was buried in foliage. The factory districts below were grimy and bare, but to the north and the west the roofs were hid in a forest with only a "mansion" here and there or a church steeple projecting.

Beyond the business and shopping section, and toward the hill tops, were tight little streets, heavily shaded and walled with red-brick fronts built cheek to cheek, with decent chins of white marble steps, and alley archways for ears. Here the well-to-do had lived when the city was still a little town, and had been content to hide their arborescent side porches and deep if narrow gardens from the street.

The industrial prosperity of the eighties had ended this Quaker restraint. In my day those who could afford it lived further west-

ward in houses that sprawled in ample yards, thickset with trees and shrubbery behind iron or wooden fences. Here was a God's plenty of architecture. Brick boxes of the seventies, with cupolas or mansard roofs, and porches screened with graceful scrolls of iron work were set in old-fashioned contrast beside new contraptions, some of green serpentine, but the latest of brick pseudo-Gothic, with turrets, pointed towers, and Egyptian ornaments of wood. And a little off line with the right-angle streets were still to be seen a few old farm houses of weathered Brandywine granite as colorful as a slice of plum cake, so severe and pure in line that they made the neighboring mansions seem opulent and vulgar, as indeed many of them were.

*The Age of Confidence, 1934*

## 14. Chestnut Street, Philadelphia

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

There is something very individual about Chestnut street. It could not possibly be in New York. The solid, placid dignity of most of the buildings, the absence of skyscrapers, the plain stone fronts with the arched windows of the sixties, all these bespeak a city where it is still a little bit bad form for a building to be too garishly new. I may be wrong, but I do not remember in New York any such criss-cross of wires above the streets. Along Chestnut street they run at will from roof to roof over the way.

Gazing from our little balcony the eye travels down along the uneven profile of the northern flank of Chestnut street. From the Wanamaker wireless past the pale, graceful minaret of the Federal Reserve Bank, the skyline drops down to the Federal Building which, standing back from the street, leaves a gap in the view. Then the slant of roofs draws the eye upward again, over the little cluster of conical spires on Green's Hotel (like a French chateau) to the sharp ridges and heavy pyramid roof of the Merchants' Union Trust Company. This, with its two attendant banks on either side, is undoubtedly the most extraordinary architectural curiosity Chestnut street can boast. The façade, with its appalling quirks and twists of stone and iron grillwork, its sculptured Huns and Medusa faces, is something to contemplate with alarm.

After reaching Seventh street, Chestnut becomes less adventur-

ous. Perhaps awed by the simple and stately beauty of Independence Hall and its neighbors, it restrains itself from any further originality until Fourth street, where the ornate Gothic of the Provident claims the eye. From our balcony we can see only a part of Independence Hall, but we look down on the faded elms along the pavement in front and the long iron posts beloved of small boys for leapfrog. Then the eye climbs to the tall and graceful staff above the Drexel Building, where the flag ripples cleanly against the blue. And our view is bounded, far away to the east, by the massive tower of the Victor factory in Camden. . . .

The part of Chestnut street that is surveyed by our balcony is a delightful highway: friendly, pleasantly dignified, with just a touch of old fashioned manners and homeliness. It is rather akin to a London street. And best of all, almost underneath our balcony is a little lunch room where you can get custard ice cream with honey poured over it, and we think it is the best thing in the world.

*Travels in Philadelphia, 1920*

# Recollections of Sleepy Hollow

WASHINGTON IRVING

I

Having pitched my tent, probably for the remainder of my days, in the neighborhood of Sleepy Hollow, I am tempted to give some few particulars concerning that spell-bound region, especially as it has risen to historic importance under the pen of my revered friend and master, the sage historian of the New Netherlands, [Diedrich Knickerbocker]. Beside, I find the very existence of the place has been held in question by many, who, judging from its odd name and from the odd stories current among the vulgar concerning it, have rashly deemed the whole to be a fanciful creation, like the Lubber Land of mariners. I must confess there is some apparent cause for doubt, in consequence of the coloring given by the worthy Diedrich to his descriptions of the Hollow, who, in this instance, has departed a little from his usually sober if not severe style, beguiled, very probably, by his predilection for the haunts of his youth and by a certain lurking taint of romance whenever any thing connected with the Dutch was to be described. I shall endeavor to make up for this amiable error on the part of my venerable and venerated friend by presenting the reader with a more precise and statistical account of the Hollow, though I am not sure that I shall not be prone to lapse in the end into the very error I am speaking of, so potent is the witchery of the theme.

I believe it was the very peculiarity of its name and the idea of something mystic and dreamy connected with it that first led me in my boyish ramblings into Sleepy Hollow. The character of the valley seemed to answer to the name; the slumber of past ages apparently reigned over it; it had not awakened to the stir of improvement which had put all the rest of the world in a bustle. Here reigned good, old long-forgotten fashions; the men were in home-spun garbs, evidently the product of their own farms and the manufacture of their own wives; the women were in primitive short gowns and petticoats, with the venerable sun-bonnets of Holland origin. The lower part of the valley was cut up into small farms, each consisting of a little meadow and corn-field, an orchard of sprawling, gnarled apple-trees, and a garden, where the rose, the marigold, and the hollyhock were permitted to skirt the domains of

the capacious cabbage, the aspiring pea, and the portly pumpkin. Each had its prolific little mansion teeming with children, with an old hat nailed against the wall for the housekeeping wren; a motherly hen, under a coop on the grass-plot, clucking to keep around her a brood of vagrant chickens; a cool, stone well with the moss-covered bucket suspended to the long balancing-pole, according to the antediluvian idea of hydraulics; and its spinning-wheel humming within doors, the patriarchal music of home manufacture.

The Hollow at that time was inhabited by families which had existed there from the earliest times and which, by frequent intermarriage, had become so interwoven as to make a kind of natural commonwealth. As the families had grown larger the farms had grown smaller, every new generation requiring a new subdivision, and few thinking of swarming from the native hive. In this way that happy golden mean had been produced, so much extolled by the poets, in which there was no gold and very little silver. One thing which doubtless contributed to keep up this amiable mean was a general repugnance to sordid labor. The sage inhabitants of Sleepy Hollow had read in their Bible, which was the only book they studied, that labor was originally inflicted upon man as a punishment of sin; they regarded it, therefore, with pious abhorrence and never humiliated themselves to it but in cases of extremity. There seemed, in fact, to be a league and covenant against it throughout the Hollow as against a common enemy. Was any one compelled by dire necessity to repair his house, mend his fences, build a barn, or get in a harvest, he considered it a great evil that entitled him to call in the assistance of his friends. He accordingly proclaimed a "bee" or rustic gathering, whereupon all his neighbors hurried to his aid like faithful allies, attacked the task with the desperate energy of lazy men eager to overcome a job, and, when it was accomplished, fell to eating and drinking, fiddling and dancing for very joy that so great an amount of labor had been vanquished with so little sweating of the brow.

Yet let it not be supposed that this worthy community was without its periods of arduous activity. Let but a flock of wild pigeons fly across the valley, and all Sleepy Hollow was wide awake in an instant. The pigeon season had arrived! Every gun and net was forthwith in requisition. The flail was thrown down on the barn floor; the spade rusted in the garden; the plough stood idle in the furrow; every one was to the hillside and stubble-field at daybreak to shoot or entrap the pigeons in their periodical migrations.

So, likewise, let but the word be given that the shad were ascending the Hudson, and the worthies of the Hollow were to be seen launched in boats upon the river setting great stakes and stretching their nets like gigantic spider-webs half across the stream to the great annoyance of navigators. Such are the wise provisions of Nature, by which she equalizes rural affairs. A laggard at the plough is often extremely industrious with the fowling-piece and fishing-net; and, whenever a man is an indifferent farmer, he is apt to be a first-rate sportsman. For catching shad and wild pigeons there were none throughout the country to compare with the lads of Sleepy Hollow.

As I have observed, it was the dreamy nature of the name that first beguiled me in the holiday roving of boyhood into this sequestered region. I shunned, however, the populous parts of the Hollow, and sought its retired haunts far in the foldings of the hills, where the Pocantico "winds its wizard stream," sometimes silently and darkly through solemn woodlands, sometimes sparkling between grassy borders in fresh, green meadows, sometimes stealing along the feet of rugged heights under the balancing sprays of beech and chestnut trees. A thousand crystal springs, with which this neighborhood abounds, sent down from the hill-sides their whimpering rills, as if to pay tribute to the Pocantico. In this stream I first essayed my unskilful hand at angling. I loved to loiter along it with rod in hand, watching my float as it whirled amid the eddies or drifted into dark holes under twisted roots and sunken logs, where the largest fish are apt to lurk. I delighted to follow it into the brown recesses of the woods, to throw by my fishing-gear and sit upon rocks beneath towering oaks and clambering grape-vines, bathe my feet in the cool current and listen to the summer breeze playing among the tree-tops. My boyish fancy clothed all nature around me with ideal charms and peopled it with the fairy beings I had read of in poetry and fable. Here it was I gave full scope to my incipient habit of day-dreaming and to a certain propensity to weave up and tint sober realities with my own whims and imaginings, which has sometimes made life a little too much like an Arabian tale to me, and this "working-day world" rather like a region of romance.

The great gathering-place of Sleepy Hollow in those days was the church. It stood outside of the Hollow, near the great highway, on a green bank shaded by trees, with the Pocantico sweeping round it and emptying itself into a spacious millpond. At that time the Sleepy Hollow church was the only place of worship for a wide neighborhood. It was a venerable edifice, partly of stone and partly

of brick, the latter having been brought from Holland in the early days of the province before the arts in the New Netherlands could aspire to such a fabrication. On a stone above the porch were inscribed the names of the founders, Frederick Filipsen, a mighty patroon of the olden time, who reigned over a wide extent of this neighborhood and held his seat of power at Yonkers, and his wife, Katrina Van Courtlandt, of the no less potent line of the Van Courtlandts of Croton, who lorded it over a great part of the Highlands.

The capacious pulpit and its wide-spreading sounding-board were likewise early importations from Holland, as [was] also the communion-table, of massive form and curious fabric. The same might be said of a weather-cock perched on top of the belfry, which was considered orthodox in all windy matters until a small pragmatistical rival was set up on the other end of the church above the chancel. This latter bore, and still bears, the initials of Frederick Filipsen and assumed great airs in consequence. The usual contradiction ensued that always exists among church weather-cocks, which can never be brought to agree as to the point from which the wind blows, having doubtless acquired from their position the Christian propensity to schism and controversy.

Behind the church and sloping up a gentle acclivity, was its capacious burying-ground, in which slept the earliest fathers of this rural neighborhood. Here were tombstones of the rudest sculpture, on which were inscribed in Dutch the names and virtues of many of the first settlers, with their portraitures curiously carved in similitude of cherubs. Long rows of grave-stones, side by side, of similar names but various dates, showed that generation after generation of the same families had followed each other and been garnered together in this last gathering-place of kindred.

Let me speak of this quiet grave-yard with all due reverence, for I owe it amends for the heedlessness of my boyish days. I blush to acknowledge the thoughtless frolic with which, in company with other whipsters, I have sported within its sacred bounds during the intervals of worship, chasing butterflies, plucking wild flowers, or vying with each other who could leap over the tallest tomb-stones, until checked by the stern voice of the sexton.

The congregation was in those days of a really rural character. City fashions were as yet unknown, or unregarded, by the country people of the neighborhood. Steam-boats had not as yet confounded town with country. A weekly market-boat from Tarrytown, the "Farmer's Daughter" navigated by the worthy Gabriel Requa, was the only communication between all these parts and the metropolis.

A rustic belle in those days considered a visit to the city in much the same light as one of our modern fashionable ladies regards a visit to Europe: an event that may possibly take place once in the course of a lifetime, but to be hoped for rather than expected. Hence the array of the congregation was chiefly after the primitive fashions existing in Sleepy Hollow; or if by chance there was a departure from the Dutch sun-bonnet or the apparition of a bright gown of flowered calico, it caused quite a sensation throughout the church. As the dominie generally preached by the hour, a bucket of water was providently placed on a bench near the door in summer with a tin cup beside it, for the solace of those who might be athirst, either from the heat of the weather or the drouth of the sermon.

Around the pulpit and behind the communion-table, sat the elders of the church, reverend, gray-headed, leathern-visaged men, whom I regarded with awe, as so many apostles. They were stern in their sanctity, kept a vigilant eye upon my giggling companions and myself, and shook a rebuking finger at any boyish device to relieve the tediousness of compulsory devotion. Vain, however, were all their efforts at vigilance. Scarcely had the preacher held forth for half an hour on one of his interminable sermons, than it seemed as if the drowsy influence of Sleepy Hollow breathed into the place; one by one the congregation sank into slumber; the sanctified elders leaned back in their pews, spreading their handkerchiefs over their faces, as if to keep off the flies; while the locusts in the neighboring trees would spin out their sultry summer notes, as if in imitation of the sleep-provoking tones of the dominie.

## II

I have thus endeavored to give an idea of Sleepy Hollow and its church as I recollect them to have been in the days of my boyhood. It was in my stripling days, when a few years had passed over my head, that I revisited them in company with the venerable Diedrich. I shall never forget the antiquarian reverence with which that sage and excellent man contemplated the church. It seemed as if all his pious enthusiasm for the ancient Dutch dynasty swelled within his bosom at the sight. The tears stood in his eyes as he regarded the pulpit and the communion-table; even the very bricks that had come from the mother country seemed to touch a filial chord within his bosom. He almost bowed in deference to the stone above the porch, containing the names of Frederick Filipsen and Katrina Van Courtlandt, regarding it as the linking together of those patronymic names, once so famous along the banks of the

Hudson, or rather as a key-stone, binding that mighty Dutch family connexion of yore, one foot of which rested on Yonkers and the other on the Croton. Nor did he forbear to notice with admiration the windy contest which had been carried on, since time immemorial and with real Dutch perseverance, between the two weather-cocks, though I could easily perceive he coincided with the one which had come from Holland.

Together we paced the ample church-yard. With deep veneration would he turn down the weeds and brambles that obscured the modest brown grave-stones, half sunk in earth, on which were recorded in Dutch the names of the patriarchs of ancient days, the Ackers, the Van Tassels, and the Van Warts. As he sat on one of the tomb-stones, he recounted to me the exploits of many of these worthies; and my heart smote me, when I heard of their great doings in days of yore, to think how heedlessly I had once sported over their graves.

From the church, the venerable Diedrich proceeded in his researches up the Hollow. The genius of the place seemed to hail its future historian. All nature was alive with gratulation. The quail whistled a greeting from the corn-field; the robin carolled a song of praise from the orchard; the loquacious catbird flew from bush to bush with restless wing, proclaiming his approach in every variety of note, and anon would whisk about and perk inquisitively into his face, as if to get a knowledge of his physiognomy; the wood-pecker, also, tapped a tattoo on the hollow apple-tree, and then peered knowingly round the trunk to see how the great Diedrich relished his salutation; while the ground-squirrel scampered along the fence and occasionally whisked his tail over his head, by way of a huzza!

The worthy Diedrich pursued his researches in the valley with characteristic devotion, entering familiarly into the various cottages and gossiping with the simple folk in the style of their own simplicity. I confess my heart yearned with admiration to see so great a man, in his eager quest after knowledge, humbly demeaning himself to curry favor with the humblest, sitting patiently on a three-legged stool, patting the children, and taking a purring grimalkin on his lap, while he conciliated the good-will of the old Dutch housewife and drew from her long ghost stories, spun out to the humming accompaniment of her wheel.

His greatest treasure of historic lore, however, was discovered in an old goblin-looking mill, situated among rocks and waterfalls, with clanking wheels, and rushing streams, and all kinds of uncouth

noises. A horse-shoe, nailed to the door to keep off witches and evil spirits, showed that this mill was subject to awful visitations. As we approached it, an old negro thrust his head, all dabbled with flour, out of a hole above the water-wheel, and grinned, and rolled his eyes, and looked like the very hobgoblin of the place. The illustrious Diedrich fixed upon him, at once, as the very one to give him that invaluable kind of information never to be acquired from books. He beckoned him from his nest, sat with him by the hour on a broken mill-stone by the side of the waterfall, heedless of the noise of the water and the clatter of the mill; and I verily believe it was to his conference with this African sage and the precious revelations of the good dame of the spinning-wheel, that we are indebted for the surprising though true history of Ichabod Crane and the headless horseman, which has since astounded and edified the world.

### III

But I have said enough of the good old times of my youthful days; let me speak of the Hollow as I found it, after an absence of many years, when it was kindly given me once more to revisit the haunts of my boyhood. It was a genial day, as I approached that fated region. The warm sunshine was tempered by a slight haze, so as to give a dreamy effect to the landscape. Not a breath of air shook the foliage. The broad Tappan Sea was without a ripple, and the sloops, with drooping sails, slept on its glassy bosom. Columns of smoke, from burning brush-wood, rose lazily from the folds of the hills on the opposite side of the river and slowly expanded in mid-air. The distant lowing of a cow or the noontide crowing of a cock, coming faintly to the ear, seemed to illustrate rather than disturb the drowsy quiet of the scene.

I entered the hollow with a beating heart. Contrary to my apprehensions, I found it but little changed. The march of intellect, which had made such rapid strides along every river and highway, had not yet, apparently, turned down into this favored valley. Perhaps the wizard spell of ancient days still reigned over the place, binding up the faculties of the inhabitants in happy contentment with things as they had been handed down to them from yore. There were the same little farms and farmhouses, with their old hats for the house-keeping wren, their stone wells, moss-covered buckets, and long balancing poles. There were the same little rills, whimpering down to pay their tributes to the Pocantico, while that wizard stream still kept on its course as of old through solemn woodlands and fresh green meadows: nor were there wanting joyous holiday boys to

loiter along its banks, as I have done, throw their pin-hooks in the stream or launch their mimic barks. I watched them with a kind of melancholy pleasure, wondering whether they were under the same spell of the fancy that once rendered this valley a fairy land to me. Alas! alas! to me every thing now stood revealed in its simple reality. The echoes no longer answered with wizard tongues; the dream of youth was at an end; the spell of Sleepy Hollow was broken!

I sought the ancient church on the following Sunday. There it stood on its green bank among the trees; the Pocantico swept by it in a deep dark stream, where I had so often angled; there expanded the mill-pond as of old, with the cows under the willows on its margin, knee-deep in water, chewing the cud and lashing the flies from their sides with their tails. The hand of improvement, however, had been busy with the venerable pile. The pulpit fabricated in Holland had been superseded by one of modern construction, and the front of the semi-Gothic edifice was decorated by a semi-Grecian portico. Fortunately, the two weather-cocks remained undisturbed on their perches at each end of the church and still kept up a diametrical opposition to each other on all points of windy doctrine.

[When I entered] the church, the changes of time continued to be apparent. The elders round the pulpit were men whom I had left in the gamesome frolic of their youth, but who had succeeded to the sanctity of station of which they once had stood so much in awe. What most struck my eye was the change in the female part of the congregation. Instead of the primitive garbs of homespun manufacture and antique Dutch fashion, I beheld French sleeves, French capes, and French collars, and a fearful-fluttering of French ribbands.

When the service was ended I sought the church-yard, in which I had sported in my unthinking days of boyhood. Several of the modest brown stones on which were recorded in Dutch the names and virtues of the patriarchs had disappeared and had been succeeded by others of white marble, with urns and wreaths and scraps of English tomb-stone poetry, marking the intrusion of taste and literature and the English language in this once unsophisticated Dutch neighborhood.

As I was stumbling about among these silent yet eloquent memorials of the dead, I came upon names familiar to me, of those who had paid the debt of nature during the long interval of my absence. Some I remembered—my companions in boyhood, who had

sported with me on the very sod under which they were now mouldering; others who in those days had been the flower of the yeomanry, figuring in Sunday finery on the church green; others, the white-haired elders of the sanctuary, once arrayed in awful sanctity around the pulpit, and ever ready to rebuke the ill-timed mirth of the wanton stripling who, now a man, sobered by years and schooled by vicissitudes, looked down pensively upon their graves. "Our fathers," thought I, "where are they!—and the prophets, can they live for ever?"

I was disturbed in my meditations by the noise of a troop of idle urchins, who came gambolling about the place where I had so often gambolled. They were checked, as I and my playmates had often been, by the voice of the sexton, a man staid in years and demeanor. I looked wistfully in his face; had I met him any where else, I should probably have passed him by without remark; but here I was alive to the traces of former times and detected in the demure features of this guardian of the sanctuary the lurking lineaments of one of the very playmates I have alluded to. We renewed our acquaintance. He sat down beside me on one of the tomb-stones over which we had leaped in our juvenile sports, and we talked together about our boyish days and held edifying discourse on the instability of all sublunary things, as instanced in the scene around us. He was rich in historic lore, as to the events of the last thirty years and the circumference of thirty miles, and from him I learned the appalling revolution that was taking place throughout the neighborhood. All this I clearly perceived he attributed to the boasted march of intellect, or rather to the all-pervading influence of steam. He bewailed the times when the only communication with town was by the weekly market-boat, the "Farmer's Daughter" which under the pilotage of the worthy Gabriel Requa braved the perils of the Tappan Sea. Alas! Gabriel and the "Farmer's Daughter" slept in peace. Two steamboats now splashed and paddled up daily to the little rural port of Tarrytown. The spirit of speculation and improvement had seized even upon that once quiet and unambitious little dorp. The whole neighborhood was laid out into town lots. Instead of the little tavern below the hill, where the farmers used to loiter on market days and indulge in cider and gingerbread, an ambitious hotel with cupola and verandas now crested the summit, among churches built in the Grecian and Gothic styles, showing the great increase of piety and polite taste in the neighborhood. As to Dutch dresses and sun-bonnets, they were no longer tolerated or even thought of; not a farmer's daughter but now went to town

for the fashions; nay, a city milliner had recently set up in the village, who threatened to reform the heads of the whole neighborhood.

I had heard enough! I thanked my old playmate for his intelligence and departed from the Sleepy Hollow church with the sad conviction that I had beheld the last lingerings of the good old Dutch times in this once favored region. If any thing were wanting to confirm this impression, it would be the intelligence which has just reached me that a bank is about to be established in the aspiring little port just mentioned. The fate of the neighborhood is therefore sealed. I see no hope of averting it. The golden mean is at an end. The country is suddenly to be deluged with wealth. The late simple farmers are to become bank directors and drink claret and champagne, and their wives and daughters to figure in French hats and feathers, for French wines and French fashions commonly keep pace with paper money. How can I hope that even Sleepy Hollow can escape the general inundation? In a little while, I fear the slumber of ages will be at end; the strum of the piano will succeed to the hum of the spinning-wheel; the trill of the Italian opera to the nasal quaver of Ichabod Crane; and the antiquarian visitor to the Hollow, in the petulance of his disappointment, may pronounce all that I have recorded of that once favored region a fable.

*Biographies and Miscellanies, 1866*

# The Shakers of New York

ARTEMUS WARD

The Shakers is the strangest religious sex I ever met. I'd hearn tell of 'em and I'd seen 'em, with their broad brim'd hats and long wastid coats; but I'd never cum into immejit contact with 'em, and I'd sot 'em down as lackin intelleck, as I'd never seen 'em to my Show—leastways, if they cum they was disguised in white people's close, so I didn't know 'em.

But in the Spring of 18—, I got swamp't in the exterior of New York State, one dark and stormy night, when the winds Blue pityusly, and I was forced to tie up with the Shakers.

I was toilin threw the mud, when in the dim vister of the futer I obsarved the gleams of a taller candle. Tiein a hornet's nest to my off hoss's tail to kinder encourage him, I soon reached the place. I knockt at the door, which it was opened unto me by a tall, slick-faced, solum lookin individooal, who turn'd out to be a Elder.

"Mr. Shaker," sed I, "you see before you a Babe in the Woods, so to speak, and he axes shelter of you."

"Yay," sed the Shaker, and he led the way into the house, another Shaker bein sent to put my hosses and waggin under kiver.

A solum female, lookin sumwhat like a last year's bean-pole stuck into a long meal-bag, cum in and axed me was I athurst and did I hunger, to which I urbanely anserd "a few." She went orf and I endeverd to open a conversashun with the old man.

"Elder, I spect?" sed I.

"Yay," he sed.

"Helth's good, I reckon?"

"Yay."

"What's the wages of a Elder, when he understans his bizness—or do you devote your sarvices gratooitus?"

"Yay."

"Stormy night, sir."

"Yay."

"If the storm continners there'll be a mess underfoot, hay?"

"Yay."

"It's onpleasant when there's a mess underfoot."

"Yay."

"If I may be so bold, kind sir, what's the price of that pe cooler kind of weskit you wear, incloodin trimmins?"

"Yay."

I pawsd a minit, and then, thinkin I'd be fashesus with hirn and see how that would go, I slapt him on the shoulder, bust into a harty larf, and told him that as a *yayer* he had no livin ekal.

He jumpt up as if Bilin water had bin squirted into his ears, groaned, rolled his eyes up tords the sealin and sed: "You're a man of sin!" He then walkt out of the room.

Jest then the female in the meal-bag stuck her hed into the room and statid that refreshments awaited the weary traveler, and I sed if it was vittles she ment the weary traveler was agreeable, and I follered her into the next room.

I sot down to the table and the female in the meal-bag pored out sum tea. She sed nothin, and for five minutes the only live thing in that room was a old wooden clock, which tickt in a subdood and bashful manner in the corner. This dethly stillness made me oneasy, and I determined to talk to the female or bust. So sez I, "Marrige is agin your rules, I bleeve, marm?"

"Yay."

"The sexes liv strickly apart, I spect?"

"Yay."

"It's kinder singler," sez I, puttin on my most sweetest look and speakin in a winnin voice, "that so fair a made as thou never got hitched to some likely feller." (N.B.—She was upards of 40 and homely as a stump fence, but I thawt I'd tickil her.)

"I don't like men!" she sed, very short.

"Wall, I dunno," sez I, "they're a rayther important part of the populashun. I don't scacely see how we could git along without 'em."

"Us poor wimin folks' would git along a grate deal better if there was no men!"

"You'll excoos me, marm, but I don't think that air would work. It wouldn't be regler."

"I'm fraid of men!" she sed.

"That's onnecessary, marm. *You* ain't in no danger. Don't fret yourself on that pint."

"Here we're shot out from the sinful world. Here all is peas. Here we air brothers and sisters. We don't marry and consekently we hav no domestic difficulties. Husbans don't abooze their wives—wives don't worrit their husbans. There's no children here to worrit

us. Nothin to worrit us here. No wicked matrimony here. Would thow like to be a Shaker?"

"No," sez I, "it ain't my stile."

I had now histed in as big a load of pervishuns as I could carry comfortable, and, leanin back in my cheer, comenst pickin my teeth with a fork. The female went out, leavin me all alone with the clock. I hadn't sot thar long before the Elder poked his hed in at the door. "You're a man of sin!" he sed, and groaned and went away.

Direckly thar cum in two young Shakeresses, as putty and slick lookin gals as I ever met. It is troo they was drest in meal-bags like the old one I'd met previsly, and their shiny silky har was hid from sight by long white caps, sich as I spose female Josts wear; but their eyes sparkled like diminds, their cheeks was like roses, and they was charming enuff to make a man throw stuns at his granmother, if they axed him to. They comenst clearin away the dishes, castin shy glances at me all the time. I got excited. I forgot Betsy Jane in my rapter, and sez I, "My pretty dears, how air you?"

"We air well," they solumly sed.

"What's the old man?" sed I, in a soft voice.

"Of whom dost thow speak—Brother Uriah?"

"I mean the gay and festiv cuss who calls me a man of sin. Shoudn't wonder if his name was Uriah."

"He has retired."

"Wall, my pretty dears," sez I, "let's hav sum fun. Let's play Puss in the corner. What say?"

"Air you a Shaker, sir?" they axed.

"Wall, my pretty dears, I haven't arrayed my proud form in a long weskit yit, but if they was all like you perhaps I'd jine 'em. As it is, I'm a Shaker pro-temporary."

They was full of fun. I seed that at fust, only they was a leetle skeery. I tawt 'em Puss in the corner and sich like plase, and we had a nice time, keepin quiet of course so the old man shouldn't hear. When we broke up, sez I, "My pretty dears, ear I go you hav no objections, hav you, to a innersent kiss at partin?"

"Yay," thay sed, and I *yay'd*.

I went up stairs to bed. I spose I'd bin snoozin half a hour when I was woke up by a noise at the door. I sot up in bed, leaning on my elbers and rubbin my eyes, and I saw the follerin picter: the Elder stood in the doorway, with a taller candle in his hand. He hadn't no wearin appeerel on except his night close, which fluttered in the breeze like a Seseshun flag. He sed, "You're a man of sin!" then groaned and went away.

I went to sleep agin, and dremp't of runnin' orf with the pretty little Shakeresses, mounted on my Californy Bar. I thawt the Bar insisted on steerin' strate for my dooryard in Baldinsville, and that Betsy Jane cum out and giv us a warm recepshun with a panful of Bilin water. I was woke up arly by the Elder. He sed refreshments was reddy for me down stairs. Then sayin I was a man of sin, he went groanin away.

As I was goin threw the entry to the room where the vittles was, I cum across the Elder and the old female I'd met the night before, and what d'ye spose they was up to? Huggin and kissin like young lovers in their gushingist state. Sez I, "My Shaker friends, I reckon you'd better suspend the rules, and git marrid!"

"You must excoos Brother Uriah," sed the female; "he's subjeck to fits, and hain't got no command over hissself when he's into 'em."

"Sartinly," sez I; "I've bin took that way myself frequent."

"You're a man of sin!" sed the Elder.

Arter breakfast my little Shaker frends cum in agin to clear away the dishes.

"My pretty dears," sez I, "shall we *yay* agin?"

"Nay," they sed, and I nay'd.

The Shakers axed me to go to their meetin, as they was to hav sarvices that mornin, so I put on a clean biled rag and went. The meetin house was as neat as a pin. The floor was white as chalk and smooth as glass. The Shakers was all on hand, in clean weskits and meal-bags, ranged on the floor like milingtery companies, the mails on one side of the room and the females on tother. They commenst clappin their hands and singin and dancin. They danced kinder slow at fust, but as they got warmed up they shaved it down very brisk, I tell you. Elder Uriah, in particler, exhiberted a right smart chance of spryness in his legs, considerin his time of life, and as he cum a dubble shuffle near where I sot, I rewarded him with a approv'in smile, and sed: "Hunky boy! Go it, my gay and festiv cuss!"

"You're a man of sin!" he sed, continnerin his shuffle.

The Sperret, as they called it, then moved a short fat Shaker to say a few remarks. He sed they was Shakers and all was ekal. They was the purest and seleckest peple on the yearth. Other peple was sinful as they could be, but Shakers was all right. Shakers was all goin kerslap to the Promist Land, and nobody wa'nt goin to stand at the gate to bar 'em out; if they did they'd git run over.

The Shakers then danced and sang agin, and arter thay was threw, one of 'em axed me what I thawt of it.

Sez I, "What duz it siggerfy?"

"What?" sez he.

"Why this jumpin up and singin? This longweskit bizness, and this anty-matrimony idee? My frends, you air neat and tidy. Your lands is flowin with milk and honey. Your brooms is fine, and your apple sass is honest. When a man buys a kag of apple sass of you he don't find a grate many shavins under a few layers of sass—a little Game I'm sorry to say sum of my New Englan ancesters used to practiss. Your garding seeds is fine, and if I should sow 'em on the rock of Gibraltar probly I should raise a good mess of garding sass. You air honest in your dealins. You air quiet and don't disturb nobody. For all this I giv you credit. But your religion is small pertaters, I must say. You mope away your lives here in single retchidness, and as you air all by yourselves nothing ever conflicks with your pecooler idees, except when Human Nater busts out among you, as I understan she sumtimes do. [I giv Uriah a sly wink here, which made the old feller squirm like a speared Eel.] You wear long weskits and long faces, and lead a gloomy life indeed. No children's prattle is ever hearn around your hearthstuns—you air in a dreary fog all the time, and you treat the jolly sunshine of life as tho' it was a thief, drivin it from your doors by them weskits, and meal-bags, and pecooler noshuns of yourn. The gals among you, sum of which air as slick pieces of caliker as I ever sot eyes on, air syin to place their heds agin weskits which kiver honest, manly harts, while you old heds fool yerselves with the idee that they air fulfillin their mishun here, and air contented. Here you air, all pend up by yerselves, talkin about the sins of a world you don't know nothin of. Meanwhile said world continners to resolve round on her own axletree onct in every 24 hours, subjeck to the Constitution of the United States, and is a very plesant place of residence. It's a unnatral, onreasonable and dismal life you're leadin here. So it strikes me. My Shaker frends, I now bid you a welcome adoo. You have treated me exceedin well. Thank you kindly, one and all."

"A base exhibiter of depraved monkeys and onprincipled wax works!" sed Uriah.

"Hello, Uriah," sez I, "I'd most forgot you. Wall, look out for them fits of yourn, and don't catch cold and die in the flour of your youth and beauty."

And I resoomed my jerney.

*Artemus Ward: His Book, 1862*

# At Schoharie Crossing

WALTER D. EDMONDS

## I

One Friday evening, early in May, a line of sixty boats was drawn up to the towpath at the Schoharie Creek crossing. In those first years of the Erie, the crossing stream was let into the canal on one side, with a guard lock below, and a dam on the other side to take the overflow along its natural channel. It was easy enough to cross above the dam with the water at normal level; but when a freshet hit a creek, the space above the dam became a mill race, with treacherous eddies to add trouble to the side pull. There were plenty of such crossings on the old Erie, and the Schoharie was the worst of the lot.

Their horns wailing, the boats had come in at fairly regular intervals during the morning; but old Caleb, who tended the guard lock, took one look at the two and a half feet of extra water boiling over the dam and went on combing his beard. He was proud of that beard. It reached well down toward his knees; and his continual combing kept it clean, so that it was glossy, and just about the color of old pewter. Boat captains used to have trouble getting him out of his hut in rainy weather (he was afraid that the wet would take out the curl) until some of them bought him an umbrella.

The captains were a tough lot. Freight companies were already beginning to get a pretty solid hold on the long hauls and the immigrant trade, which meant that speed was at a premium; and as only the packet boats could afford to pay the ten-dollar fine for speeding, the freighters tried to make up their time by fighting for first place at the locks. It got so bad that after a while a captain would feel a man's muscle before asking him what he knew about boating.

Three or four of them who knew Caleb were sitting with him in his hut, each with his rum balanced in a tumbler on his knee and smoking or chewing to suit his taste; and they were making a sociable session out of it, what with the wind on the roof and the warmth inside. One sat on a chair and the rest had boxes; and old Caleb perched on the edge of his bunk and combed his beard.

One of the captains, a sly-looking little man who wore a pipe hat and green galluses, got up and looked through a window at the dam. He had to lift his voice for the others to hear him through the roaring of that water. "How long will she stay up, Caleb?" he asked.

"Why," said Caleb, "I don't rightly know as she's got all the way up yet. She's the worst one I ever see."

"Well," said another one, a big red-headed man from Little Falls, who had never been licked east of Utica and who wouldn't let any man work on his boat unless he had red hair and could roll a brogue as well as a quid on his tongue, "sippisin' it reaches high water to-night, Caleb me honey, what time'd ye think I could get the owld lady acrosst?"

As usual the *Dublin Queen* was the first freighter in the line. Caleb got a bit of mirror down from the wall and put some finishing touches on the part over his chin.

"Well," he said, "it might be a day, or it might be two, or it might be more. I ain't saying. If it rains again, it might be more; if it don't rain, it might not."

"That's a help, to be sure," said the red-headed man, whose name was O'Mory.

"I can feel rain," announced the man on the chair.

"You, Joe?" asked the man with the pipe hat.

"Rain," said the other. "Barrels of it, Gratwick. An ocean, no less. It's coming down from the north on my old peg." He thrust out a wooden leg and began to rub the thigh above it.

"Hark to that, the wizen owld creature! Talkin' of rain, and it only stopped this noon."

"I've got a Dutchman on my boat," said Gratwick, putting his pipe hat inside the box he was sitting on. "He's all loaded up with wagons and ploughs, and he's got his family. He offered me twenty dollars extra if I could get him to Buffalo onside of two weeks. Jeepers! If it don't commence to go down by to-morrow night, I'll chance the crossing anyways."

"Haw, haw!" O'Mory guffawed. "You'll cross with them cheese-horse mules of yourn?"

"Well, they be kind of poor," the other admitted. "But say, O'Mory, you and me can club our teams on each boat and get 'em over that way."

"Sure," said Caleb. "That'd be easy. It's been tried four times, only the rope broke three of the times."

"That's right," said Joe, emphasizing his words with thrusts of

his wooden leg against the stove. "I was in line when Bellows's boat went over."

"The *Manlius*?"

"That's right. There wasn't only a dog drowned and nobody killed, though the horses got all tangled tumbling forward when the rope broke."

"I heard Grimshaw was killed."

"He don't count," said Joe. "He was lying drunk on the forward hutch and never knowed what struck him. You couldn't rightly say he was killed."

"Was the boat smashed up?"

Caleb opened the back door into his little woodshed. When he returned, he brought the northwest wind with him in a gust that stuck out his beard in front. "There's what's left of her tiller," he said, showing them a twelve-inch stick before poking it into the stove.

"Holy Mither!" cried O'Mory. "She must've sat down hard!"

"The other two boats wasn't hurt bad," said old Caleb, soothing his whiskers back into place. "Only they had to float them back down the river as far as Schenectady to get back into the canal."

The others cuffed their knees and roared with laughter. The wind began to rattle hail against the shanty.

"There's my rain commencing," said Joe, triumphantly slapping his wooden leg.

A flat wailing rose from down the canal, the sound of it crawling haltingly through the gusts.

"That's Gurget's horn," said Caleb; "he got it off a ladder wagon in New York."

The conversation came round to the high water again.

"I'm telling you," said Caleb sententiously, "it ain't safe for a boat to try the crossing this water."

Gratwick agreed. "No. It ain't safe. And even if the rope held, it would take more'n one team."

Joe considered the notion foolhardy.

"Phwat does that mean?" asked O'Mory.

"You don't know nothing," retorted Joe, making a stab at the Irishman with his wooden leg. "You ought to go to New York where they're making a society for learning dumb folks to read!"

"They need it!" snorted Caleb. "They said Clinton couldn't never build his 'ditch.' They said it would take more'n two years to blast round Cohoes—and how long did it take?" He flourished his comb. "Eighty days."

A moment's silence followed the old man's answer.

"Who was the feller whose rope didn't break?" O'Mory asked suddenly.

"That was Simpson. He'd a load of ashes on, for the lye factory to Little Falls," said Caleb.

"How'd he get acrosst?"

"He didn't."

"I thought ye said his rope didn't break, ye image."

"It didn't," said Caleb. "It was this way. He had a three-mule team, see? And he got them just about to the end of the bridge afore the water took the boat over the dam. The rope didn't break, so the mules went over, too. One of them sat on his hind end afore he went over, and brayed like prayer."

"I'll bet Simpson acted up," said Joe.

"He shed tears," Caleb admitted.

"Well . . ." said Gratwick, yawning and putting on his pipe-hat, "it ain't safe to chance it. I guess we'll have to hang out round here till Monday anyhow."

The rattle of hail faded away from the roof; and at the same time the wind died down.

"Where's your rain now?" O'Mory asked Joe.

"Don't you get sad; it's just getting its second wind."

The sun came out from under the northwest clouds with a level, shining light on the wet ground, and one of the men opened the door. It had become suddenly warm, with an earth-smelling mistiness beginning to rise down by the river.

Old Caleb glanced out at the cross-anchor weather vane he had stuck up on a pole above the lock. "Look at that!" he cried. "Wind's switched to the southwest."

"That's the second wind I was telling you about," Joe said to O'Mory. "Now we will have rain, by Jeepers!"

"Oh Lord!" groaned O'Mory.

Joe got up and stumped over to the door. There he jammed his peg into the corner of the sill and braced his shoulders against the frame, steady as a rock.

He stared away down the canal. "There's eight more boats come in," he announced.

Calling to mind the long wails they had heard since they had entered the hut, the others nodded.

"Any foights?" asked O'Mory.

"No."

"Here comes another boat," said Joe, after a minute.

As he spoke, the trilling of a French horn burst out on the water and rang up and down the valley in diminishing echoes.

"Glory! What's that?" asked the Irishman.

"Red bullhead boat," said Joe. "Black team."

The horn rang out again and again. Caleb shifted his weight uneasily. "That's Herman Peters, or I'm Tammany Hall."

"Peters!"

"Yeanh, the Utica bully. Never been licked for first place to a lock. There ain't a man west of Utica's stood him out of the place."

"He ain't been down to Little Falls nor met the *Dublin Queen*," observed O'Mory, giving his belt a hitch and straddling his legs. He went over to the door with a chuckle in his nose, and the others crowded after him.

2

The sunlight fell back along the course of the canal, past old Fort Hunter, more than a mile to the first turn. For over half the distance they could see the boats tied up to mooring posts, here and there smoke rising from the cabin stovepipe, or, on some of the smaller line boats, from stoves set up on the centre deck. The gaudy-colored boats lay squat alongside of their reflections, in hues of scarlet, green, magenta, blue, and the increasingly popular white. The men strolled round the fields below the towpath or looked on at a horseshoe tournament being pitched out between Schenectady and Rome. An old graybeard sat with his skinny legs over the bow of the last boat and fished with a hand line in the reflection of a window.

Two packet boats fronted the line by natural prerogative, their passengers keeping aloof. A clatter of crockery issued from the cabin windows. From the first one floated the noise of a fiddle, and a darky table-boy was doing a dance for a group of ladies. A missionary was conversing earnestly with two drivers who listened politely and spat with diffidence.

"There he is," said Joe, making a motion with his wooden leg.

The fanfare of the French bugle broke out again from a scarlet freighter, trimmed green, which was drawing in to the end of the queue. The steersman swung the boat inshore and the driver snubbed the tie-ropes to posts. They left the horses on the towpath. Two men came out of the cabin and joined the steersman, who seemed to be looking the situation over. Then the four headed toward the lock-tender's shanty.

"He's looking for trouble," said Caleb.

"Sure, he's coming to the right place then," said O'Mory.

The captain of the scarlet boat was the shortest of his crew, but he was heavy-set—two hundred and thirty pounds, as Gratwick appraised him.

"I'll be giving him maybe twelve pounds," nodded O'Mory grinning, "but look at me reach, will you?" He stretched out his arms, shoulder high, as if he would embrace the whole Utica crew, and broke into a laugh. He was taller by a head than the approaching bully.

The newcomer had a black beard that reached to the middle button of his waistcoat. The sleeves of his blue shirt were rolled to the elbows, revealing arms heavy as a blacksmith's. He had hands like sledges and a straight, thick chest. His neck was so short that with his sloping shoulders he appeared able to draw in his head like a turtle. He stood up straight, his feet wide apart, and fronted the Irishman.

"Where's the tender?" he demanded.

Caleb glanced at the sky and came out of the shanty without his umbrella. "I'm that man," he said, stroking his beard.

"Why the hell don't you let this line through?"

Caleb pointed his thumb over his shoulder at the dam. "Want to try it?"

The bully looked at the foaming water. "Think I'm a fool?"

"I've had suspicions of that same," O'Mory said, joyfully.

The others drew back; it was no business of theirs if O'Mory wanted to start a fight. He had been spoiling for something to do for the past two hours, and they preferred his bestowing his energy on Peters instead of one of themselves. East of Utica there were few men who wanted war with the *Dublin Queen*.

The Irishman whistled shrilly on his fingers. Instantly three men hustled off the green freighter at the head of the line and ran up to the shanty. Every one of them had red hair and a broad grin. "Original Irishers," O'Mory called them. "The only bhoys with gravy enough to dig out the Montezumy Swamp, by gorry!" Still grinning, they lined up behind O'Mory and studied the three men from the scarlet boat. After a moment the smallest of them tipped a wink to the man on his right and exchanged places with him to face the smallest of his opponents. It was evident that the *Dublin Queen* managed these affairs on a systematic basis.

Peters hunched up his shoulders and looked O'Mory up and down. "Who the hell are you?"

"Me father's bhoy," said O'Mory happily.

"Do you say I ain't?"

"God forbid! The O'Morys is Irish."

His men cheered and Peter's face flushed over his beard. But he pulled himself in. "Before I lick you," he said, "I've got to lick the lead boat in this line. I'm going to be first through when the water falls."

"Sure, ye can put the two foights into one," said O'Mory, "and give us some fun. I'm first in the line."

"All right, boys!" shouted Peters.

### 3

At that instant they heard a bell ringing down the line. The sound was so unusual on the Erie, where the boaters for the most part carried horns, that the men drew apart. What they saw put the fight out of their minds for the moment. A big boat with perfectly square ends and badly weathered white paint was coming up past the others behind the rapid walk of a heavy roan team. The towrope was attached to a standard in the bow, allowing it just to clear the roofs of the boats tied up.

"Look at his hayseed rig, will you?" exclaimed Joe, with a thrust of his peg.

The roans were hitched to an evener—not in tandem like the other horses.

"Glory be!" cried O'Mory, while the Utica men broke out in a rash of swearing. "What does he think he's going to do?"

"If he's going to fight for first place," said Peters, "I'll tend to him first."

"Sure," said O'Mory, "it'll save me the throuble of licking two men."

The team was coming on steadily, pulling without strain, and the old boat cuddled the ripples in front of it and shoved them aside. A woman, not more than twenty, was steering it. She had capable, strong hands on the tiller, and she stood straight with her head back and her eyes steady on the towrope. She wore no hat, and her hair, which fell loose down her back, shone with a white light like barley straw. As the boat neared the lock, the men by the shanty made out that her eyes were blue and that her face was as handsome as the rest of her. While they watched, she unhooked a heavy dinner bell from the tiller and swung it back and forth above her head, and through the noise they saw that she was tall.

Compared to her, the man driving looked squat. When he came to the end of the freight line, he pulled the horses up with a word, and the young woman brought the old boat up beside O'Mory's. Then she tossed a rope clean over the *Dublin Queen*, and the driver caught it and snubbed it to a post, so that the rope pulled right across the *Queen's* bows.

When he had spoken for a minute to the young woman, he walked up to the lock-tender's hut. "Say," he asked in a sleepy sort of voice, "what's all the line for?"

"Look there, son," said Caleb, pointing his thumb at the water, "and ask me another one."

The young man did. "What of it?" he said.

He was short and very heavy, with a red, square face and light hair like the woman's, and his wrists were overboned like a farmer's. He had a kind of dullness about him, which made one think he was slow to make up his mind, but a deal slower to unmake it. And right away all the men could see that he meant to get across the Schoharie, high water or no high water. Most of the boaters had come up when they saw O'Mory and Peters facing off, and now a few sporty gentlemen stepped off the packets to see what was going on. It made them all laugh to hear the young man say, "What of it?"—and they laughed louder when he put his hands in the pockets of his jeans and dug the toe of his shoe into the sand. He got a little redder in the face, but he said, "I can get across all right."

He lowered his head and shook it from side to side at Caleb. "I got to get out to Ohio," he said. "I got a brother there setting out a farm, and me and my wife is taking out the tools and stock. We got to get there by June."

Joe tapped him on the knee with the end of his peg leg. "You don't know how that current can drag onto a boat."

"I got a good team," said the young man. They were a big pair, beyond a doubt—not the ordinary boat horses. Beside O'Mory's mules they looked like a two-ton team.

"Maybe you have," said Joe; "but the last four boats that tried crossing on high water went over the dam. One took three mules with it, and the rope broke on the others."

"I got a new rope, and my team ain't mules."

"You're a stranger on this canal," said Gratwick, "or you'd know it couldn't be did."

"It's a good team I got," said the young man. "They know how to pull."

"Listen to reason," said O'Mory, as if that were a favorite habit of his.

"We warned him," said Caleb. "It ain't no fault of ours if he busts his boat."

Peters had been pushed into the background by the young man's foolishness. It was a position for which he had no relish. He spat in front of the young man's toe. "Look here, young squirt," he growled, "you needn't set up for God A'mighty over us. I was just telling him," jerking his head at O'Mory, "that there wasn't any freighter going to cross ahead of mine."

"He did so," said O'Mory, cocking his head at the bystanders. "Phwat do you know about that?"

"You'll get *yours*," said Peters.

Then he turned to the young man. "Since she come on the Erie, the *Pretty Fashion* ain't never been second on any lock she come to."

"Sure, she hasn't met the *Dublin Queen* yet," cried O'Mory.

The crowd surged to let the young woman into the circle. She had a decisive chin, and her blue eyes gleamed. "What's the fuss?"

Her husband turned to her doubtfully. "They say the water's too high."

She gazed at the dam, shading her eyes against the sun. "We'll try it," she decided.

Her husband pointed to Peters. "This man says he won't let us try ahead of him, and I guess he's afraid to try now."

"Thru for you, lad," cried O'Mory.

"It don't make no difference," said Peters hoarsely. "There ain't any boats crossing ahead of the *Pretty Fashion*."

"We can't waste no time," said the woman. "Lick him, Dan."

#### 4

Her husband stared at Peters as if he were trying to make up his mind. "I don't know as I *can* lick him," he said. "I'm slow."

"He ain't no whiplash himself, to look at him," said O'Mory in encouragement. Next to having a good brawl, the crew of the *Dublin Queen* enjoyed watching a good fight.

"Go ahead, Dan," said the woman. "You can do it. Make him stand up to you."

Her husband lifted his gaze from the ground and stared again at Peters, as a man might in judging a horse. And then he looked on up the canal where the sun was beginning to sink to the rim of the valley.

A silence hovered on the crowd; even the sky seemed to hold its breath. Only the roar of the water in its ungovernable rush thudded upon the ear, and faint supper smells bloomed in the stillness. A few waiters had come out among the ladies on the packet boats. By the towpath the roan team drowsed with collars loose on their shoulders. The clear sunlight threw the shadows of the people far behind them on the grass.

The young man, with his wife at his side, stared westward; and, caught by the intentness of his gaze, the quiet crowd turned their eyes up the valley. But they saw only the beginning of a sunset. When they turned back to the young man, he was unbuttoning his shirt.

“Hooroar!” yelled O’Mory. “It’s on!”

Peters laughed suddenly out of his black beard, and the crowd took up the Irishman’s shout.

“Aw hell,” said a boat captain nervously, “it ain’t no fight—he’s just a kid.”

“Lay you a dollar on the younker,” cried Joe, driving his peg into the sand and reaching for his wallet.

“All right.”

“This ain’t no place for a fight,” said Gratwick. “You’d better move up to the edge of the lock. It’s level there. And all the rest of us can see you.”

Peters laughed shortly, for he was confident of having an easy time. “That’s right,” he said. “You watch me.”

The young man hesitated a moment, and then said that he was agreeable.

Caleb took it upon himself to see fair play. He had watched a fight once among the city mobs on Long Island, so he got up beside the lock with them and announced in style: “Herman Peters, bully of Utica, and not licked yet, gentlemen!”

Peters grinned and took off his waistcoat. The level light threw the figures into silhouette, so that color became a matter of conjecture, except where the sun shone through Caleb’s beard, making a yellow mist of the little hairs and his whole head beautiful. He spat into the lock again and, clearing his throat, pointed to the young man, who bent before his wife as she pulled his undershirt over his head. “Peters versye Dan,” cried Caleb, “versye Dan . . .”

“Wagner,” said the young woman.

“Dan Wagner . . . a young man going west!”

The crowd cheered as they swarmed to the foot of the embankment. The two teamsters and the missionary called off their con-

ference; and while the men crowded in at the foot of the lock the missionary debated in himself whether he should try to stop the fight. The young woman stood on a lock beam, her husband's shirt upon her arm; and the missionary stepped toward the crowd. But as the two men faced each other against the sun, the bully in his shirt, the other stripped to the waist with the light gleaming on his skin, the missionary found that he had not the heart to speak, and he remembered that it was not Sunday.

The ladies clustered the packet-boat decks under their parasols, apparently unaware of what was toward; and the waiters crowded upon the bows. The graybeard who had been fishing went below deck, and when he reappeared he had a spyglass at his eye.

Caleb stood between the two combatants. They were both shorter than he, and the young man looked almost tubby. He had a great girth, like a wrestler's, and his legs had been made stiff by lifting weights; but when he lowered his head and moved it a little from side to side, you could see the power of an ox behind his shoulders. Both he and Peters stood with their hands at their sides; but Peters was erect and confident, and his grin showed through his beard.

"The lad hasn't a chance," said Gratwick.

Stillness fell again upon the crowd, so that there was no noise but the falling water, until old Caleb stepped back, lifting his voice, to say, "I reckon you might as well commence."

The bully rushed with a shout, head drawn in, his fists driving straight from his shoulders. And above the noise of the water, as the young man tried ponderously to dodge, those in the foreground heard two solid thuds. A curse slipped out of O'Mory's mouth and the *Dublin Queen* groaned aloud, while Joe stamped his peg deeper into the sand and tried to look away; for all of them had taken odds on the young man—on the long chance, being Irishmen.

The bully rushed again, and the young man was too slow to get out of the way, but he turned his body so that the blows lost a little of their force in glancing. Even so, his knees gave, and the men of the *Pretty Fashion* uttered a shout, which the crowd took up as they surged one step forward. The sun made things black and white, so that black spots smudged the white belly of the young man; and the Irishmen yelled, "Low!"

"Niver mind," O'Mory said to his crew, "we'll remoid the blackguard in a while."

Far down beyond the fight, the missionary cried out within himself as the bully rushed savagely again and yet again with the same

thud-thud, which the young man was too slow to dodge and too clumsy to return.

After the sixth rush the young man still faced Peters, with his feet braced and his head sunk forward; but instead of moving it from side to side, he stared straight into the bully's eyes, and his line of vision carried to the far corner of the level space, where the balance beam of the upper gate cut off a six-foot triangle. While Peters caught his wind, the young man raised his hands—it seemed for the first time. The woman cried out suddenly and waved the shirt; and the crew of the *Dublin Queen* set up a shout, for they saw what he intended.

The young man bored in and his back bent behind his hands; and, though he landed only once, the men below heard a heavy smash and a sob of wind from the bully's mouth; and they saw the sun tangled in Caleb's beard as the old man scurried out of the way.

When the sun spots went out of their eyes, the crowd beheld the fighters in the triangle, on two sides the water, on one side the tilted gate-beam. The young man stood with his head down, the light glistening on his shoulders where the sweat ran down. Peters was covering up; and a black smear that must have been blood crawled out from under his beard and down his throat to the collar of his shirt.

"Lick him!" screamed the young woman.

The Irishmen shouted. The crowd swayed as some men tried to hedge their bets. There was no room for rushing there. The fight hung now on weight and the sheer strength of shoulders, backs, and arms. A family of French immigrants began to sing the "Marseillaise," and the young man moved in on Peters. Neither of them dared give ground; for if the young man was forced back from the opening, he lost his advantage; and if Peters stepped back more than once, the water would have him. . . .

The sun seemed to stand still behind them; and old Caleb lay on his belly, his beard in the dirt, so that those below might see.

The two stood foot to foot and they drove their fists into each other in great slow blows, behind which their backs bent and came straight and bent again. At the sound of each blow, the crowd heard the grunt of the man who had been hit and the sigh of the man who had struck; and the roar of the water became something small and far away. The shadows of the two men stretched out and over the crowd and fought in the air where only Caleb could see them. . . .

Little by little the crowd edged up on the lock. The Irishmen

in front lay down, and the men behind them kneeled, to let the others watch. The ladies folded their parasols and looked on from the packet boats, because the crews had gone ashore and there was no one to notice them. The missionary found that the advancing crowd spoiled his view, so he started to climb up to the roof of Caleb's shanty, wondering if he would get up in time to see the end. But the two men still stood together, and their elbows came back against the sun and their hands drove in. They both struck for the body, and they both landed, for they were too close to miss.

The crowd thought no more of betting. This fight had no like in their memories: but a few of the gentlemen began to understand how the Erie came to be built by the strength in the arms of men. The crews of the *Dublin Queen* and the *Pretty Fashion* forgot their quarrel and lay side by side like brothers, and the gentlemen took off their tiles so that the teamsters behind could see.

Peters shifted his aim to the other's face; and blood made streaks on the young man's jaw and went down over his chest, parting above the little patch of hair, and ran down upon his belly; but he shook the sun from his sight and sent his fists for the body. Once he wiped the sweat from his eyes with a snatch of his hand; and in the same instant the bully tore open the collar of his shirt. His face streamed and his shirt looked wet. The onlookers saw that he was afraid, and a little driver boy howled between the legs of his captain. . . .

It was a long time for the crowd before the young man stepped back, putting his hand to his mouth to stop the tremble, and tried to speak. But he could not move his broken lips. So the young woman cried, "Had enough?"

Peters put down his head and rushed. The *Pretty Fashion* muttered that it was the end, now their captain had room; and the *Dublin Queen* prayed that it was not. The young man drew himself up and raised his right fist above his shoulder and smashed it down on top of the black hair—a blow to fell an ox. The bully fell forward on top of his rush; his back wiggled a little before it went still; and his teeth caught shut on the new grass between the young man's feet.

## 5

The crowd caught their breath with a sound like wind upon the snow; and as the young man stepped back the missionary on Caleb's roof cried, "Praise God!" No one spoke, until a murmur grew

among those who had not seen the blow, and it swelled into a shout. . . . The ladies put up their parasols. The cooks ran back to their burned food. In little groups the boaters drifted back to their boats to get supper.

The young woman wiped the blood off her husband's face with the end of her skirt, and put the undershirt and shirt back over his head and helped him to button them. "We've got to hurry and get across before it gets dark," she said.

"Don't be a fool," O'Mory shouted. "Ye can't steer a boat as ye are now. Ye've had fun enough."

"My wife can steer," said the young man.

"But ye can't drive like ye are at all," protested O'Mory, shaking his hand and seeing the broken knuckles.

"I don't need to. I got a good team."

"Wait till the morning," said one of the *Pretty Fashion* crew, grinning, for he liked a good fight. "There ain't any boat here'll go over first. We'll tend to that. Even the *Dublin Queen* won't argue that."

"No," said O'Mory. "Divel a bit.—Not that *I* couldn't lick the whole mess of ye," he added.

"We've got to get out there by June," said the young woman.

"Yes," said her husband. "We got to get out there by June."

"Oh hell," said Caleb, but he went over to the sluice levers.

The young woman went aboard and her husband straightened out the eveners behind the team. The crews of the *Dublin Queen* and the *Pretty Fashion* helped to get the boat into the lock. With the team on the tow bridge, the young man had them double the rope and shorten it; and then, standing on the outside of the bridge, by the off horse's head, he spoke to the pair.

They settled down and went ahead with an easy, forward, upward pull into their collars, and the boat came out smoothly into the current. As the side sweep hit the boat, they drove their shoes into the planks. Their haunches puckered as they straightened their legs against the strain, and with great deliberation they set their hoofs carefully and heaved. The woman turned the bow out away from them to keep the stern in to the bridge. There was no lost motion. The young man said never a word. But when the boat crossed an eddy, the men could hear the towline hum.

In a little while, as though they had been pulling on a plough, they had the boat in the easy water beyond. They had seemed to pull so easily that even then some men refused to believe they were across. But when the young man told them to stop, they dropped

their heads and shook themselves; and the boaters saw that they trembled all over and were black with sweat.

"They know how to pull," the young man said. "They know how to pull."

The sun set as O'Mory helped him run the rope out to its full length. The woman smiled, all at once, as she thanked him; and O'Mory blushed redder than his hair.

"It was a fine foight, to be sure, if it was a thrifle slow." He lit a lantern for her, which she hung over the stern.

"Thanks," said the young man, and he spoke to his team.

"So long!" cried Caleb.

"Luck!" shouted the others. They returned to their boats, the crew of the *Pretty Fashion* picking up Peters as they went. He was still out and they let him down with a bump on the deck. Old Joe stumped away on his peg leg to try to collect his bet. O'Mory and Caleb and a gentleman from one of the packet boats remained on the lock and watched the boat glide into the dusk.

"By God!" said Caleb, beginning to untangle his beard. "By God! I bet they'll get there."

"By God, I bet he will," said O'Mory.

"Yes," said the gentleman.

"Look!" cried O'Mory, pointing his arm. "There's the name of the boat!" The lantern light fell over the stern and caught a thin tracery of gilt.

"Ye're a scholar, Caleb. Can ye read it?"

Caleb tried and shook his head. "Not that far off," he said, glad of the distance.

The gentleman took a small telescope from the pocket of his coaching coat and focused it on the stern of the boat. "I can just make out the letters," he said; and he spelled them out—"S-U-R-E A-R-R-I-V-A-L."

"What's that?" asked Caleb.

"*Sure Arrival*," said the gentleman.

"Thank ye, sir," said O'Mory.

*The Forum*, June, 1929

# Old Pennsylvania

BAYARD TAYLOR

## I. THE RAISING

When Gilbert reached home, released from his labors abroad until October, he found his fields awaiting their owner's hand. His wheat hung already heavy-headed, though green, and the grass stood so thick and strong that it suggested the rippling music of the scythe-blade which should lay it low. . . . In the midst of the haying, however, came a message which he could not disregard,—a hasty summons from Mark Deane, who, seeing Gilbert in the upper hill-field, called from the road, bidding him to the raising of Hallowell's new barn, which was to take place on the following Saturday. "Be sure and come!" were Mark's closing words—"there's to be both dinner and supper, and the girls are to be on hand!"

It was the custom to prepare the complete frame of a barn—sills, plates, girders, posts, and stays—with all their mortices and pins, ready for erection, and then to summon all the able-bodied men of the neighborhood to assist in getting the timbers into place. This service, of course, was given gratuitously, and the farmer who received it could do no less than entertain, after the bountiful manner of the country, his helping neighbors, who therefore, although the occasion implied a certain amount of hard work, were accustomed to regard it as a sort of holiday, or merry-making. Their opportunities for recreation, indeed, were so scanty that a barn-raising or a husking-party by moonlight was a thing to be welcomed.

Hallowell's farm was just half-way between Gilbert's and Kennett Square, and the site of the barn had been well-chosen on a ridge, across the road which ran between it and the farm-house. The Hallowells were what was called "good providers," and as they belonged to the class of outside Quakers, . . . the chances were that both music and dance would reward the labor of the day.

Gilbert, of course, could not refuse the invitation of so near a neighbor. . . . When the day came he was early on hand, heartily greeted by Mark, who exclaimed,—“Give me a dozen more such shoulders and arms as yours, and I'll make the timbers spin!”

It was a bright, breezy day, making the wheat roll and the leaves twinkle. Ranges of cumuli moved, one after the other like heaps

of silvery wool across the keen, dark blue of the sky. "A wonderful hay-day," the old farmers remarked, with a half-stifled sense of regret; but the younger men had already stripped themselves to their shirts . . . , and set to work with a hearty good-will. Mark, as friend, half-host, and commander, bore his triple responsibility with a mixture of dash and decision, which became his large frame and ruddy, laughing face. It was—really, and not in an oratorical sense,—the proudest day of his life.

There could be no finer sight than that of these lithe, vigorous specimens of a free, uncorrupted manhood, taking like sport the rude labor which was at once their destiny and their guard of safety against the assaults of the senses. As they bent to their work, prying, rolling, and lifting the huge sills to their places on the foundation-wall, they showed in every movement the firm yet elastic action of muscles equal to their task. Though Hallowell's barn did not rise, like the walls of Ilium, to music, a fine human harmony aided in its construction.

There was a plentiful supply of whisky on hand, but Mark Deane assumed the charge of it, resolved that no accident or other disturbance should mar the success of this, his first raising. Everything went well, and by the time [the men] were summoned to dinner, the sills and some of the uprights were in place, properly squared and tied.

It would require a Homeric catalogue to describe the dinner. To say that the table groaned, is to give no idea of its condition. Mrs. Hallowell and six neighbors' wives moved from kitchen to dining-room, replenishing the dishes as fast as their contents diminished, and plying the double row of coatless guests with a most stern and exacting hospitality. The former would have been seriously mortified had not each man endeavored to eat twice his usual requirement.

After the slight rest which nature enforced—though far less than nature demanded, after such a meal—the work went on again with greater alacrity, since every timber showed. Rib by rib the great frame grew, and those perched aloft, pinning the posts and stays, rejoiced in the broad, bright landscape opened to their view. They watched the roads, in the intervals of their toil, and announced the approach of delayed guests, all alert for the sight of the first riding-habit.

Suddenly two ladies made their appearance, over the rise of the hill, one cantering lightly and securely, the other bouncing in her seat, from the rough trot of her horse.

"Look out! there they come!" cried a watcher.

"Who is it?" was asked from below.

"Where's Barton? He ought to be on hand,—it's Martha Deane,—and Sally with her; they always ride together." . . .

By ones and twos the girls now gathered rapidly, and ere long they came out in a body to have a look at the raising. Their coming in no wise interrupted the labor; it was rather an additional stimulus, and the young men were right. Although they were not aware of the fact, they were never so handsome in their uneasy Sunday costume and awkward social ways, as thus in their free, joyous, and graceful element of labor. Greetings were interchanged, laughter and cheerful nothings animated the company, and when Martha Deane said,—

"We may be in the way, now—shall we go in?"

Mark responded,—

"No, Martha! No, girls! I'll get twice as much work out o' my twenty-five 'jours,' if you'll only stand where you are and look at 'em."

"Indeed!" Sally Fairthorn exclaimed. "But we have work to do as well as you. If you men can't get along without admiring spectators, we girls can."

The answer which Mark would have made to this pert speech was cut short by a loud cry of pain or terror from the old half-dismantled barn on the other side of the road. All eyes were at once turned in that direction, and beheld Joe Fairthorn rushing at full speed down the bank, making for the stables below. Mark, Gilbert Potter, and Sally, being nearest, hastened to the spot.

"You're in time!" cried Joe, clapping his hands in great glee. "I was awfully afeard he'd let go before I could git down to see him fall. Look quick—he can't hold on much longer!"

Looking into the dusky depths, they saw Jake, hanging by his hands to the edges of a hole in the floor above, yelling and kicking for dear life.

"You wicked, wicked boy!" exclaimed Sally, turning to Joe, "what have you been doing?"

"Oh," he answered, jerking and twisting with fearful delight, "there was such a nice hole in the floor! I covered it all over with straw, but I had to wait ever so long before Jake stepped onto it, and then he ketched hold goin' down, and nigh spoilt the fun."

Gilbert made for the barn-floor, to succor the helpless victim; but just as his step was heard on the boards, Jake's strength gave way. His fingers slipped, and with a last howl down he dropped, eight

or ten feet, upon a bed of dry manure. Then his terror was instantly changed to wrath; he bounced upon his feet, seized a piece of rotten board, and made after Joe, who, anticipating the result, was already showing his heels down the road.

Meanwhile the other young ladies had followed, and so, after discussing the incident with a mixture of amusement and horror, they betook themselves to the house, to assist in the preparations for supper. Martha Deane's eyes took in the situation and immediately perceived that it was capable of a picturesque improvement. In front of the house stood a superb sycamore, beyond which a trellis of grape-vines divided the yard from the kitchen-garden. Here on the cool green turf, under shade, in the bright summer air, she proposed that the tables should be set and found little difficulty in carrying her point. It was quite convenient to the outer kitchen door, and her ready invention found means of overcoming all other technical objections. Erelong the tables were transported to the spot, the cloth laid, and the aspect of the coming entertainment grew so pleasant to the eye that there was a special satisfaction in the labor.

An hour before sundown the frame was completed; the skeleton of the great barn rose sharp against the sky, its fresh white-oak timber gilded by the sunshine. Mark drove in the last pin, gave a joyous shout, which was answered by an irregular cheer from below, and lightly clambered down by one of the stays. Then the black jugs were produced, and passed from mouth to mouth, and the ruddy, glowing young fellows drew their shirt-sleeves across their faces, and breathed the free, full breath of rest.

## II. OLD KENNETT MEETING

On the Sunday succeeding his return, Gilbert Potter proposed to his mother that they should attend the Friends' Meeting at Old Kennett.

The Quaker element . . . largely predominated in this part of the county; and even the many families who were not actually members of the sect were strongly colored with its peculiar characteristics. Though not generally using "the plain speech" among themselves, they invariably did so towards Quakers, varied but little from the latter in dress and habits, and with very few exceptions regularly attended their worship. In fact, no other religious attendance was possible without a Sabbath journey too long for the well-used farm-horses. To this class belonged Gilbert and his mother, the Fairthorns, and even the Bartons. Farmer Fairthorn

had a birthright, it is true, until his marriage, which having been a stolen match and not performed according to "Friends' ceremony," occasioned his excommunication. He might have been restored to the rights of membership by admitting his sorrow for the offense, but this he stoutly refused to do. The predicament was not an unusual one in the neighborhood; but a few, among whom was Dr. Deane, Martha's father, submitted to the required humiliation. As this did not take place, however, until after her birth, Martha was still without the pale, and preferred to remain so for two reasons: first, that a scoop bonnet was monstrous on a young woman's head; and second, that she was passionately fond of music and saw no harm in a dance. This determination of hers was, as her father expressed himself, a "great cross" to him; but she had a habit of paralyzing his argument by turning against him the testimony of the Friends in regard to forms and ceremonies, and their reliance on the guidance of the Spirit.

Herein Martha was strictly logical, and though she and others who belonged to the same class were sometimes characterized, by a zealous Quaker in moments of bitterness, as being "the world's people," they were generally regarded not only with tolerance but in a spirit of fraternity. The high seats in the gallery were not for them, but they were free to any other part of the meeting-house during life, and to a grave in the grassy and briery enclosure adjoining when dead. The necessity of belonging to some organized church was recognized but faintly, if at all; provided their lives were honorable, they were considered very fair Christians.

Mary Potter but rarely attended meeting, not from any lack of the need of worship, but because she shrank with painful timidity from appearing in the presence of the assembled neighborhood. She was, nevertheless, grateful for Gilbert's success, and her heart inclined to thanksgiving; besides, he desired that they should go, and she was not able to offer any valid objection. So, after breakfast, the two best horses of the team were very carefully groomed, saddled, and—Sam having been sent off on a visit to his father, with the house-key in his pocket—the mother and son took the road up the creek.

Both were plainly yet very respectably dressed, in garments of the same home-made cloth, of a deep, dark brown color, but Mary Potter wore under her cloak the new crape shawl which Gilbert had brought to her from Wilmington, and his shirt of fine linen displayed a modest ruffle in front. The resemblance in their faces was even more strongly marked, in the common expression of

calm, grave repose which sprang from the nature of their journey. A stranger meeting them that morning would have seen that they were persons of unusual force of character and bound to each other by an unusual tie.

Up the lovely valley, or rather glen, watered by the eastern branch of Redley Creek, they rode to the main highway. It was an early spring, and the low-lying fields were already green with the young grass; the weeping-willows in front of the farm-houses seemed to sprout up and fall like broad enormous geysers as the wind swayed them, and daffodils bloomed in all the warmer gardens. The dark foliage of the cedars skirting the road counteracted that indefinable gloom which the landscapes of early spring in their grayness and incompleteness so often inspire, and mocked the ripened summer in the close shadows which they threw. It was a pleasant ride, especially after mother and son had reached the main road, and other horsemen and horsewomen issued from the gates of farms on either side, taking their way to the meeting-house. Only two or three families could boast vehicles. . . . No healthy man or woman, however, unless he or she were very old, travelled otherwise than on horseback.

Now and then exchanging grave but kindly nods with their acquaintances, they rode slowly along the level upland, past the Anvil Tavern, through Logtown,—a cluster of primitive cabins at the junction of the Wilmington Road,—and reached the meeting-house in good season. Gilbert assisted his mother to alight at the stone platform built for that purpose near the women's end of the building, and then fastened the horses in the long, open shed in the rear. Then, as was the custom, he entered by the men's door, and quietly took a seat in the silent assembly.

The stiff, unpainted benches were filled with the congregation, young and old, wearing their hats, and with a stolid, drowsy look upon their faces. Over a high wooden partition the old women in the gallery, but not the young women on the floor of the house, could be seen. Two stoves, with interminable lengths of pipe, suspended by wires from the ceiling, created a stifling temperature. Every slight sound or motion,—the moving of a foot, the drawing forth of a pocket-handkerchief, the lifting or lowering of a head,—seemed to disturb the quiet as with a shock and drew many of the younger eyes upon it; while in front, like the guardian statues of an Egyptian temple, sat the older members, with their hands upon their knees or clasped across their laps. Their faces were grave and severe.

After nearly an hour of this suspended animation, an old Friend rose, removed his broad-brimmed hat, and placing his hands upon the rail before him, began slowly swaying to and fro, while he spoke. As he rose into the chant peculiar to the sect, intoning alike his quotations from the Psalms and his utterances of plain, practical advice, an expression of quiet but almost luxurious satisfaction stole over the faces of his aged brethren. With half-closed eyes and motionless bodies, they drank in the sound like a rich draught, with a sense of exquisite refreshment. A close connection of ideas, a logical derivation of argument from text, would have aroused their suspicions that the speaker depended rather upon his own active, conscious intellect, than upon the moving of the Spirit; but this aimless wandering of a half-awake soul through the cadences of a language which was neither song nor speech, was to their minds the evidence of genuine inspiration.

When the old man sat down, a woman arose and chanted forth the suggestions which had come to her in the silence, in a voice of wonderful sweetness and strength. Here Music seemed to revenge herself for the slight done to her by the sect. The ears of the hearers were so charmed by the purity of tone, and the delicate, rhythmical cadences of the sentences that much of the wise lessons repeated from week to week failed to reach their consciousness.

After another interval of silence, the two oldest men reached their hands to each other,—a sign which the younger members had anxiously awaited. The spell snapped in an instant; all arose and moved into the open air, where all things at first appeared to wear the same aspect of solemnity. The poplar-trees, the stone wall, the bushes in the corners of the fence, looked grave and respectful for a few minutes. Neighbors said, "How does thee do?" to each other in subdued voices, and there was a conscientious shaking of hands all around before they dared to indulge in much conversation.

Gradually, however, all returned to the out-door world and its interests. The fences became so many posts and rails once more, the bushes so many elders and blackberries to be cut away, and the half-green fields so much sod for corn-ground. Opinions in regard to the weather and the progress of spring labor were freely interchanged, and the few unimportant items of social news, which had collected in seven days, were gravely distributed. This was at the men's end of the meeting-house; on their side, the women were similarly occupied, but we can only conjecture the subjects of their conversation. The young men—as is generally the case in religious

sects of a rigid and clannish character—were by no means handsome. Their faces all bore the stamp of *repression*, in some form or other, and as they talked their eyes wandered with an expression of melancholy longing and timidity towards the sweet, maidenly faces, whose bloom, and pure, gentle beauty not even their hideous bonnets could obscure.

*The Story of Kennett, 1865*

# Hans Breitmann in Maryland

## A Ballad of the Civil War

CHARLES G. LELAND

Der Breitmann mit his gompany,  
Rode out in Marylandt.  
“Dere’s nichts to trink in dis countrie;  
Mine troat’s as dry as sand.  
It’s light canteen und haversack,  
It’s hoonger mixed mit doorst;  
Und if we had some lager-bier  
I’d trink oontil I boorst  
Gling, glang, gloria!  
We’d trink oontil we boorst.

“Herr Leut’nant, take a dozen men,  
Und ride dis land around!  
Herr Feldwebel, go foragin’  
Dill somedings goot is found.  
Gotts-doonder! men, go ploonder!  
We hafn’t trinked a bit  
Dis fourteen hours! If I had bier  
I’d sauf oontil I shplit!  
Gling, glang, gloria!  
We’d sauf oontil we shplit!”

At mitternacht a horse’s hoofs  
Coom rattlin’ troo de camp;  
“Rouse dere!—coom rouse der house dere!  
Herr Copitain—we moost tromp!  
De scouds have found a repel town,  
Mit repel davern near,  
A repel keller in de cround,  
Mit repel lager bier!!  
Gling, glang, gloria!  
All fool of lager-bier!”

Gottsdonnerkreuzschockschwerenoth!  
How Breitmann broked de bush!  
"O let me see dat lager bier!  
O let me at him rush!  
Und is mein sabre sharp und true,  
Und is mein war-horse goot?  
To get one quart of lager bier  
I'd shpill a sea of plood.  
Gling, glang, gloria!  
I'd shpill a sea of plood.

"Fuenf hoonderd repels hold de down,  
One hoonderd strong are we;  
Who gares a tam for all de odds  
Wenn men so dirsty pe."  
And in dey smashed and down dey crashed,  
Like donder-polts dey fly,  
Rush fort as der wild yaeger cooms  
Mit blitzen troo de shky.  
Gling, glang, gloria!  
Like blitzen troo de shky.

How flewed to rite, how flewd to left  
De moundains, drees unt hedge;  
How left und rite de yaeger corps  
Went donderin troo de pridge.  
Und splash und splosh dey ford de shtream  
Where not some pridges pe:  
All driplin in de moonlight peam  
Stracks went de cavallrie!  
Gling, glang, gloria!  
Der Breitmann's cavallrie.

Und hoory, hoory on dey rote,  
Oonheedin vet or try;  
Und horse und rider shnort und blowed,  
Und shparklin bepples fly.  
Ropp! ropp! I shmell de barley-prew!  
Dere's somedings goot ish near.  
Ropp! Ropp!—I scent de kneiperei;  
We've got to lager bier!  
Gling, glang, gloria!  
We've got to lager bier.

Hei! how de carpine pullets klined  
Oopon de helmets hart!  
Oh, Breitmann—how dy sabre ringed;  
Du alter Knasterbart!  
De contrapands dey sing for choy  
To see de rebs go down,  
Und hear der Breitmann grimly gry:  
Hoorah!—we've dook de down.  
Gling, glang, gloria!  
Victoria, victoria!  
De Dootch have dook de down.

Mid shout and crash and sabre flash,  
And wild husaren shout  
De Dootchmen boorst de keller in,  
Unt rolled de lager out;  
And in the coorlin powder shmoke,  
While shtill de pullets sung.  
*Dere* shtood der Breitmann, axe in hand,  
A knockin out de boong.  
Gling, glang, gloria!  
Victoria! Encoria!  
De shpicket beats de boong.

Gotts! vot a shpree der Breitmann had  
While yet his hand was red,  
A trinkin lager from his poots  
Among de repel tead.  
'Twas dus dey went at mitternight  
Along der moundain side;  
'Twas dus dey help make history!  
Dis was der Breitmann's ride.  
Gling, glang, gloria;  
Victoria! Victoria!  
Cer'visia, encoria?  
De treadful mitnight ride  
Of Breitmann's wild Freischarlinger,  
All famous, broad, und wide.

*Hans Breitmann's Ballads, 1871*

# The Courier of the Czar

ELSIE SINGMASTER

## I

Hearing the clock strike twelve, Betsey Shindledecker opened her eyes. She had not been asleep; she had merely been waiting for her sister Tilly, who lay by her side, to be asleep. At eleven o'clock Tilly had spoken, at half past she had turned from one side to the other; but now for half an hour she had been lying quietly.

Betsey lay blinking and looking round the room. The windows were dim rectangles outlining a sky which was only a little brighter than the black wall; the ancient bureau and washstand and dower chest showed only as indistinct masses. All other objects were lost—the two colored prints on the wall, one of Marianna, one of Juliana; the mirror, the chairs, one draped with the plain Mennonite garb of Betsey, the other with the plain Mennonite garb of Tilly. The two white caps hanging on the tall posts at the foot of the bed were lost, and so were the stripes in the carpet and the gay pattern of the coverlet. It would be impossible for any night to be darker or for any wind to whistle more ominously than the wind whistled at this moment round the corners of the house.

Her mind relieved by Tilly's quiet breathing, Betsey explored with hand and foot. Her foot sought her woolen slippers, her hand the thick flannel gown which hung on the post near her head. Finding both, she stood in a moment slippered and robed. Still Tilly breathed quietly.

Moving slowly, Betsey approached the door. When a board creaked beneath her great weight she stood still a long time; when Tilly sighed she put out her hand to clutch the corner of the bureau and thus to support herself. She grew no more comfortable in mind as she advanced, because the steps would creak far more loudly than the floor, and when she reached the bottom of the flight she would have to speak a reassuring word to the dog and the cat. This was not a new experience; for almost a month she had been stealing nightly from her sister's side.

Compared to the bedroom, the kitchen was bright. The fire shone through the mica doors of the stove and was reflected from

the luster ware on the mantel and the brass knobs on the ancient cupboard. The black windowpanes formed mirrors, so that there seemed to be many fires. On one side of the room a quilt was stretched on a frame and on the taut surface lay scissors, spools of thread, a little pincushion, two pairs of spectacles and two thimbles. The ground of the quilt was dark and spread over it were multitudes of white spots of various sizes.

Other reflecting surfaces were presented by the eyes of a large gray cat and a large Airedale dog, the one lying on a chair, the other beside the stove. Apparently unsurprised by this mysterious advent in the middle of the night, the cat purred and the dog parted his lips and teeth in a grin, and both having raised their heads, laid them down. They paid no heed when Betsey, touching a spill to the coals, lit the hanging lamp which illuminated brilliantly the quilt and the sewing implements lying upon it. The background of the quilt was blue and the white spots were star-shaped. The Milky Way crossed the surface diagonally and along the edge, and in the dark spaces were set Orion, the Pleiades, Ursa Major and other familiar constellations. Between the stars the quilt was covered with tiny stitches set close together.

Sinking into one of the Windsor armchairs at the side of the frame, Betsey selected a needle from the pincushion. It was not one of the fine needles with which the delicate quilting had been done, but a larger one, and she used it not to sew, but to destroy sewing. Stitch by stitch she ripped the fine work, sighing as she did so. It was clear that that which she ripped was not so even as the section opposite the other chair.

The hands of the clock pointed to half past twelve, and presently to one. Then Betsey exchanged the large needle for a smaller one, and, threading it, began to replace the stitches she had ripped out. Those she put in were as straight as a ruler and as much alike as rice grains.

At three o'clock she rose stiffly. Though her back ached, and though her eyes were heavy and her hands stiff, she was happy; the catastrophe which she feared and against which she struggled was postponed a little longer. Then suddenly she was smitten by terror. She did not exactly hear Tilly move, but she knew that Tilly had moved; moreover, that she was awake. If Tilly spoke she believed she would die of shock. But when Tilly did speak she answered calmly.

"Betsey!" The voice was sharp with terror. "Sister!"

"Yes?" Betsey walked toward the stairway.

"Where are you?"

"I'm coming." What should she say? It would be easy to invent an excuse, but Betsey did not like to lie. "I did not lock the door, Tilly."

"Why, no, of course not! I locked it, like always. Come back to bed!"

"I'm coming," said Betsey.

Her voice was steady, but her heart jumped in her side, and as she grasped the railing to ascend she was aware of her pulse throbbing in her wrist. She felt her way across the room and lay down, slippers, gown and all. She was trembling, not only because she was frightened but because she was cold.

"I had a queer dream," said Tilly drowsily. "I dreamed I could not see any more to sew straight."

"Are you awake?" asked Betsey sharply.

Tilly did not answer. Did she speak from a dream or from full consciousness?

## II

Hearing the clock strike twelve, Betsey opened her eyes. It was harder to open them to-night than last night, and last night it had been harder than the night before. It was the twenty-eighth night she had wakened at twelve o'clock and had gone faltering down the stairs.

Beside her Tilly lay quietly, her breathing that of a child. The sky was black outside the rectangle of the window and there was again an uneasy whispering round the frame. The old furniture showed only vague outlines.

"I can't do this forever," said Betsey to herself. "I'm getting thin and I'm getting so tired I can't wake on time, and then what will happen?"

Her exploring foot sought her slippers, her exploring hand sought her bedgown. Anxiety made her nervous; she held her breath to listen. But Tilly slept sweetly.

"If I'm no more so heavy the boards won't creak so under me," she thought as she felt her way across the room. "*Ach*, but I'm tired!" She repeated the word mentally with each step—"Tired, tired, tired!"

In the kitchen there was the same glow of the fire, the same loveliness of light and shadow. The Maltese cat lay on his chair, the Airedale dog lay before the stove. Each lifted his head and each settled himself and closed his eyes. The starry quilt had advanced

a little farther; a new section was set with two varieties of stitches, one short and regular, the other long and irregular.

Betsey found her large needle and sat down heavily. She ripped one stitch, then another. The point of the needle caught in the material and made little marks. She bent lower and lower. Were her eyes also growing dim? She picked out another stitch and another; then her forehead touched the belt of Orion, her hand lay quietly upon Ursa Major.

After a long time she became conscious of some impending disaster. Was she hurt and helpless? When she opened her eyes and saw Tilly standing by the quilting frame power was restored to her and she sprang up. Tilly stood tall and bent in her gray bedgown. Saying nothing, she looked at the quilt, then at her sister, then at the quilt.

"What is it?" she asked at last. "What do you make alone here in the middle of the night?"

Betsey stood paralyzed.

"You're ripping out my sewing and doing it over. That's how it gets always all right by morning. Isn't it so, Betsey?"

Betsey did not answer.

"You think I can't see any more?" demanded Tilly.

Betsey said not a word.

"No, I can't see any more." Tilly answered her own question. "This long time already I have trouble. I can't see to sew. I can't see to read. Sometimes I can't see you. I've twice stepped on the cat and once on the dog. If I don't step on them all the time it's because they get nice out of my way. They know me. I'll give up sewing. You'll have enough trouble with me yet, Betsey, without ripping out my crooked stitches. Now come to bed."

Betsey looked at the clock. The hands pointed to half past four.

"It's not worth while to go to bed. I'll get dressed ready to milk, and I'll watch for Herr when he comes to fetch the milk and I'll say he shall tell Doctor Landis to come to us. He'll cure you, Tilly. He'll surely cure you."

### III

The clock ticked solemnly. It was now eight o'clock, now nine. Soft flakes of snow had begun to fall; the sky seemed to stoop lower and lower. Tilly sat at the end of the settle, her elbow on the arm, her hand supporting her bending face, a finger pressed upon each eye. Now and then a tear rolled down her cheek.

"It's not that I'm crying," she explained angrily. "It's that my eyes water."

"Yes," answered Betsey. Betsey was the only moving object except the pendulum of the clock. The dog and cat lay motionless but alert. Even the cupboard and the mantel and the starry quilt seemed to be alert and waiting. "It's ten o'clock," cried Betsey at last. "Why, then, does he not come?"

"He has perhaps a great many sick ones."

Betsey looked up the road and then down.

"You can't see far in the snow," she explained.

"Is it snowing?" asked Tilly.

Betsey turned from the window and looked at her sister.

"Do you ask because you want to keep your eyes covered, or is it that you can't see?"

"I want to keep my eyes covered," answered Tilly. Tilly did want to keep her eyes covered, but it was because she believed that if she uncovered them she could not see. "I sewed perhaps a little too late last evening. If you want to sew, sister," she said heroically, "then sew."

"I don't need to sew," replied Betsey. "He's coming. He has his buggy, not his auto. I guess he's afraid the snow will get deep for him. He's driving his Minnie horse, the yellow one. She's a good horse; they say when sometimes he's tired and falls asleep she takes him home. I would rather have a good horse than an auto. He's stopping at the gate." Betsey's voice grew shrill, the dog and the cat lifted their heads, the furniture seemed to stir as though that for which they all waited was now imminent. "I don't believe he'll hurt you, sister."

Doctor Landis tied his horse and came up the path, a stout, ruddy-faced man with a short, bristling mustache. He walked heavily, carrying his medicine case in one hand and a book in the other. He was a worldly Lutheran and a great reader.

"He's carrying his book," said Betsey. "He forgets he has it, I guess. If he would read the Bible, how fine that would be!"

Tilly did not answer. The water which streamed from her eyes burned like fire.

Doctor Landis brought in with him a breath of cold air and the pleasant odor of drugs. The room seemed to brighten, Tilly's spirits rose and Betsey felt so relieved that she sank upon a chair. Doctor Landis laid his medicine case and book on the settle and pulled off his gloves. He was able to speak the fluent Pennsylvania

English of his generation, though he preferred the Pennsylvania German of his ancestors.

"Well!" he exclaimed. "Did I bring that wicked book along? I have no wife and no child, and I'm not a smoker, and I must have something to fill in the time in this healthy place. It's twenty years since I was in this house. Now what's the matter with the eyes, Tilly?"

"They burn me and ache me." Tilly pressed her fingers against the lids. "I can't see any more."

"You mean you can't see me?"

"I can see you if I take my hand away; but I can't see to sew."

Doctor Landis bent above the quilt. He made an inquiring sign to Betsey, pointing first to the quilt, then to Tilly. Betsey nodded and he completed the pantomime by shaking his fist at the starry sky.

"Now let's see these eyes." He sat down beside Tilly on the settle, and she put out her hand on the other side. It touched the book which he had laid there and she clutched it and held it as though it were a rope flung to a sinking swimmer. "Open your eyes," commanded the doctor.

As Tilly obeyed with agony, the hot flood became hotter. She could see the doctor's face, but nothing beyond it, not even Betsey standing at his elbow.

"It's worse to-day than yesterday," she said, as though that lightened the seriousness of the case.

"And worse yesterday than day before, I dare say," mocked the doctor. "Yet you kept on sewing?"

"We had the starry quilt to finish," explained Tilly. "I thought when the starry quilt was done I'd rest my eyes, and then it would also be soon time to work in the garden."

The doctor lifted the lid of Tilly's right eye, then the lid of the left. Tilly could not suppress a groan, at sound of which Betsey trembled from head to foot. The doctor rose heavily.

"Have you any black muslin, Betsey?"

Betsey took a roll from the cupboard drawer.

Standing by the table, the doctor folded a thick bandage and laid white gauze upon it; then he turned to Tilly, a bottle and a medicine dropper in his hand.

"Watch me, Betsey. See? Like this, four drops in each eye, night and morning."

"Oh! Oh!" moaned Tilly.

"Keep your eyes tight shut. Now I'm going to bandage them

with a black bandage. If for any reason you have to remove it you're to do it in a dark room."

"Must my eyes be tied shut?" gasped Tilly.

"They must, indeed." The doctor stood at the table spreading salve on the white gauze. "Put fresh gauze on, Betsey, and fresh salve, night and morning."

"For how long?" faltered Tilly.

"A week from to-day I'll be back to look at them."

"A week!" cried Betsey. "Must she keep them covered for a week?"

Smitten dumb, Tilly said nothing; she merely lifted the doctor's book and opened it as if to read and thus prove that this was a bad dream.

"A week at least," said the doctor. "Then we'll see how they are. Too much quilting, Tilly. How old are you?"

"Only sixty-five," answered Tilly. "And I have good spectacles. I bought them from such a peddler twenty years ago."

"I'll bet you did," mocked the doctor.

He came across the room, holding the bandage as a child might hold a cat's cradle, and tied it tight round Tilly's eyes.

"Not a whole week!" wailed Tilly.

"A whole week," said the doctor, pulling on his gloves. "Betsey can surely amuse you for a week."

#### IV

It was nine o'clock in the morning and the Shindledecker kitchen was in order for the day. The cow had been milked hours ago, the dog and cat had been fed, the human beings had eaten their breakfasts, the dishes had been washed, and a dozen doughnuts, four pans of rusks, three pies and one cake had been baked. At the window sat Betsey, a mass of blue star-dotted material on her lap. The starry quilt was out of the frame, and she was putting in the hem. Outside, the rain poured upon the sodden earth. From within the landscape looked inexpressibly dreary, but when the door was opened, there came in the smell of spring.

Tilly did not sit at the window, nor was there sewing in her lap; she sat in the corner of the settle and her hands were empty. The black bandage remained across her eyes.

"First it was a week," she said despairingly. "Then another week and another week, and now yet another week."

"I have a feeling that next time it will be different." Betsey spoke in the strained voice of one determined to be cheerful.

"I have no such feeling," answered Tilly. "I feel that he will come and come and come and that I will sit and sit and sit. If it was only something in the world to do!"

"I'll read to you," offered Betsey.

"I know the Bible from beginning to end," declared Tilly. "I've read it every day since I was little. I don't believe it is meant that we shall get stale on it. And the hymn book, that I not only know but I can say it and sing it from the beginning to the doxology, both German and English. And the Martyr Book—that I know too. I know all about how they were persecuted and driven out and sent to prison and beheaded. I know how one of the brethren was burned with an iron. You can't catch me on the Martyr Book. And the almanac—that I know also."

"We could sing," suggested Betsey. Her voice had a heart-broken quality. Her heart was breaking.

"Sing!" mocked Tilly. "Sing! When I'm blind!"

The clock ticked on and on, the rain fell steadily, silently upon the earth, audibly upon the roof of the porch, noisily through the tin spouting. Another sort of rain fell quietly from Betsey's eyes upon the starry quilt. Tilly did not cry; the consequent physical agony was too keen.

"If I could only do something for you!" mourned Betsey in her heart.

"You can do something for me if you will," said Tilly, as though she could see into Betsey's heart.

"What can I do for you?" asked Betsey eagerly.

"There's a book in this house," said Tilly. "The doctor left it the first time. I guess he forgot it. When he said I must have my eyes tied shut I looked quickly at it. I could not read the reading, but I saw the picture. It was a picture of an old woman kneeling, and a sword was pointing at her and a man was standing with a whip over her. Her back was bare and her breast was bare. I must know what happened to that old woman. Will you not"—Tilly's wheedling voice besought, pleaded; she knew but too well how much she asked—"will you not read me that book, Betsey?"

"Where is the book?" asked Betsey, to gain time.

"Hidden in the upstairs," confessed Tilly. "I hid it. I was afraid he would ask for it. I hid it first in the churn, then I carried it in the upstairs."

"He did ask for it," said Betsey. "He said did I see such a book laying round. I told him no."

"I heard you," acknowledged Tilly. "It was before I took it to

the upstairs. I was then sitting on it. Will you read me that book, Betsey?"

"I cannot," wept Betsey. "Anything else I'll do for you. But that is the world's book."

"You'll not find out what became of that poor old woman with the sword pointing at her and the whip coming down on her?" Tilly's voice was hard.

"No," wailed Betsey. "I can't. It's to resist temptations such as this that we're given strength. We have done our duty all our lives; let us not now break our rules when we're old."

The rain fell soddenly, the tears of Betsey fell steadily. Tilly sat motionless and blind on the settle.

"The cat is getting all the time fatter," said Betsey, achieving a brief composure.

There was no reply.

"But the dog gets a little thinner now that he goes so often out rabbit chasing."

There was no answer.

"Sister," said Betsey, "won't you talk to me?"

"I have nothing to talk about," said Tilly. "Dogs, cats, rabbits, baking, rain—how sick I am of all these subjects. I would like something new to talk about. I'd like to know what became of that poor old woman with the sword pointing at her and the whip held over her. I'd like to talk about her."

"It's a book of the world's people," said Betsey. She buried her face in the starry quilt. "I can't! I can't!"

v

The sun rose at six o'clock and its earliest beam, shining in the face of Betsey, woke her from sleep and to the consciousness of a leaden heart. It was Sunday, and all her life until a few weeks ago she had wakened cheerfully on Sunday. She enjoyed the rest from labor, she loved to go to meeting, she loved all the day's peace and opportunity for meditation. The meeting-house stood across the road, and there had never been a rain so heavy or a snow so deep that attendance was impossible. A few times there had been no one else there but William Hershey, and once even William had not been able to get through the drifts on the mountain road, but the sisters never missed.

Betsey waked now with no sense of peace or assurance. She repressed a groan as, turning, she looked at the bandaged head on the pillow beside her. Six weeks had passed since the doctor's

first visit, but Tilly's eyes were still useless. She slept quietly and her mouth below the black cloth was not unhappy. The blind are said to resign themselves more quickly than the deaf; perhaps Tilly had resigned herself. Or, her fate still hanging in the balance, she may have felt hope.

Betsey had not only her acute and tender anxiety about her sister to trouble her; she had a sin to remember and a cruel penance to look forward to. She had committed an offense and this morning she meant to confess it in meeting.

"I can be a sinner," said she, weeping. "But a hypocrite I cannot be. I can't look them any more in the eye over there."

Slipping carefully from bed, she went about her work. Tilly slept late, and it was well that she did; her cruel hours of conscious darkness were that much shorter. Betsey opened the kitchen shutters and let in the horizontal sunshine; then she shook down the fire, and slipping into her working-jacket, took her milk pail on her arm. The morning was not cold: the day which had dawned was to be like a day of May dropped accidentally into March. Tulips and hyacinths were pushing up through the soil of the garden, buds were swelling, the woodland back of the house had begun to have a look of misty purple as the twigs and little branches changed color. Spring had always meant a fore-taste of Heaven to Betsey. How strange it was to have an aching heart!

Tilly slept on and on. Betsey prepared the breakfast, and still she had not come. She stole upstairs and looked at her, and realized after a moment of panic that she was asleep and not dead.

Pushing the breakfast to the back of the stove, she sat down with her Bible. But she could not read. The Book lay strangely in her hand, the words looked unnatural, there was no sense of comfort from touch or sight.

At nine o'clock, when Tilly had not waked, Betsey stole to the room once more and got her Sunday dress, and returning to the kitchen, put it on. The devil tempted her to make an excuse of Tilly's blindness to stay at home, but she resisted him. He seemed to whisper in her ear; she saw his smile, his horns, his cloven hoofs.

"Don't go this morning," he advised. "Go next Sunday. This morning the meeting will be large. William Hershey will be there with all his family; you don't wish those little children to hear you make confession. Elder Nunnemacher will be there, and you

have always stood well before him. Perhaps next Sunday he will have to go elsewhere. The Stauffer sisters will be there—think how astonished they will be! And the Erlenbaughs and the Lindakugels and the Herrs and the Schaffers—all will be amazed. Wait, Betsey, wait!”

“No,” said Betsey aloud to the empty room. “I’ll not wait. I’ll leave my poor sister to find her way down, but I’ll not wait.”

Walking to the foot of the stairs, she called up to Tilly.

“It’s time for me to go to meeting, sister. Can you eat your breakfast alone, do you think? It’s everything ready.”

“Yes,” answered Tilly. “Or perhaps I’ll lay till you come back.”

“Yes, well,” said Betsey. “You can call the dog to you.”

Betsey shuddered—she had told a lie; it was not quite time to go; only William Hershey had driven up to the meeting-house, and he came early to make the fire. But she dared not wait.

On the porch she lingered and breathed in the sweet air. If she could only breathe enough, perhaps she could ease her heart. But contemplation of Nature could not heal sin; that was certain as the sin itself. She went slowly down the path to the gate, and across the road and into the meeting-house. William Hershey was putting coal into the stove; Mary Hershey sat with her baby in her arms; little Amos and little David walked sedately about.

“Good-morning,” said William. “How are you, Betsey, and how’s poor Tilly? We’re coming soon to see you.”

“She’s not good,” answered Betsey, selecting a seat.

She did not smile at the children or answer William’s announcement of his visit; she merely turned her face to the wall and sat motionless. Her black bonnet hid her eyes, her stout shoulders were bent, her woe was so apparent that the members entering happily from the morning sunshine were cast down. Was poor Tilly, indeed, doomed to blindness?

Elder Nunnemacher did not appear and William Hershey preached a short sermon. He selected his subject for the benefit of Betsey, pointing to the joys of Heaven as a reward for the sufferings of earth, not dreaming that Betsey believed herself shut out of Heaven. Her heart sank lower and lower, her lips trembled, she could scarcely restrain herself from crying out. She knew that everybody was looking at her and feeling sorry for her, and the devil tempted her again through self-pity.

“You have nobody in the world but Tilly. You’re not rich. You have no husband and no children. Life has cheated you. Take

what pleasure you can. Show some spirit. Don't make a fool of yourself."

"I will make confession," said Betsey in her soul.

"Wait till after the hymn, anyhow," advised the devil.

"No," said Betsey. As William finished she rose slowly. "I have something to say," she announced in a muffled tone.

In the silence which followed Betsey looked at the floor. The Shindledeckers never spoke in meeting; they never spoke to any one who did not first speak to them; they almost never went from home and they never willingly admitted strangers to their house. There was, their friends believed, no one in the world so shy. And here was Betsey on her feet. All sorts of wild notions flew through their astonished minds. Was Tilly dead and had Betsey lost her reason?

"I must confess my sins," declared Betsey in a stronger tone. "I have done wrong. I have done what is forbidden among us. I have read a worldly book. It's a large book with pictures, called 'The Courier of the Czar.'" "The Courier of the Czar" was only a secondary title; upon the real name, "Michael Strogoff," Betsey did not dare to venture; as it was, she pronounced "Czar" in two syllables, the first K. "It was called 'The Courier of the K-zar.'"

She was heard not with disapproval but with stupefaction; her audience did not understand what she meant. They knew the Bible and the hymnal, and some of them knew the Martyr Book; but they knew no other literature. They did not know the word "courier" nor the word "K-zar."

Betsey saw their stupefaction.

"A courier is a messenger," she explained. "He's one that carries messages and goes on errands. A K-zar is a king."

Still all the Hersheys and Erlenbaughs and Stauffers looked at her blankly.

"It's a story," she went on. "We have stories in the Bible and stories in the Martyr Book. But we know all the stories in the Bible and the Martyr Book by heart. This is a new story. This man is to carry a message for the K-zar to his brother, who's in a city with enemies all round it. He must go three thousand miles through enemies and forests and across great rivers. The Susquehanna is nothing to those rivers. A wicked man, Ivan, catches him; and in order to make him tell who he is he takes his mother and puts a sword in front of her and is going to whip her, and when she shrinks from the whip the sword will pierce

her. That's what Ivan does. It's like you read in the Martyr Book when they burned the people and drowned them. Then when this courier defended his poor mother this Ivan burned his eyes with a hot sword and made him blind." Betsey's tongue failed her on this word; she repeated it, and her effort produced a prolonged and tragic sound—"b-l-i-n-d!"

"But he went on and on, and a young girl helped him. They find a good young man who is their friend, and this Ivan has had him buried in the sand up to his neck and big birds get after him and he dies. They come at last to the place where he is to give his message to the brother of the K-zar and they are floating on an iceberg down the river, and there are springs of something like coal oil near the river, and it's on fire, and they're floating on the ice in the midst of the fire."

Stupefaction continued, but it was now not the stupefaction of amazement but of enchantment. Betsey told her story well, and every eye was fixed upon her; every pair of lungs was either full of air or empty of air; inhalation and exhalation had ceased. Betsey, alas, ceased also.

"That's as far as I have gone," she said, exhausted. "But I'm going to finish this book. I'm going to finish it this afternoon, on the Sabbath, whether or no."

Now eye met eye, color came back into pale cheeks. The prevailing expression was one of excitement touched with horror. Betsey remained standing; she seemed about to leave; as though, willing to bear the consequences of her crime, she would excommunicate herself and depart. Only William Hershey was able to reason. He rose slowly, his gentle bearded face turned toward Betsey. Were there tears in William Hershey's eyes?

"Betsey," he asked slowly, "do you do this for your poor sister?"

Betsey seized the back of the bench before her. She looked smitten, as he looks the secret of whose heart is discovered.

"Don't blame Tilly," she said. "The doctor says she must be yet for a long time in the dark. She knows the Bible and the Martyr Book and the hymns, and now her mind has to work all the time on itself."

"You're reading this to her?"

"I'm reading it aloud," said Betsey stubbornly. "If she listens I can't help it."

"Sit down," bade William gently and commandingly. "It's here something that this sister must decide. She must do what she thinks is right. Let us sing Number Thirty-Seven."

But Betsey was not through.

"I like this reading," she confessed wildly. "I don't feel wicked in my sin. It makes me feel good; it sorts of clears out my soul. I would rather read than quilt. And we have fifty-eight quilts. Many times Tilly and I wept over the poor martyrs; why should we not weep over these poor others? Our forefathers fought with wolves where this meeting-house now stands. The Hersheys were in it, I'll bet, and the Stauffers and the Erlenbaughs—all had to fight with wolves and Indians. I forgot to say that when this poor courier of the K-zar and the young girl were floating down the fiery river the wolves got after them. They—"

William Hershey was alarmed; he despaired of Betsey's reason. He started Hymn Number Thirty-Seven.

## VI

The stewed chicken and the mashed potatoes and dried corn and slaw and cherry pie which composed the Shindledecker dinner were consumed and all evidences of the meal removed. The cat lay on his chair; he slept, then woke and looked about, then slept again. Betsey went to the porch to hang up the dish towels and the dog came back with her. He had an expectant air, and when he lay down he did not rest his head on his paws, but kept it high. Below her black bandage Tilly's mouth looked happy. Betsey was pale, but she too looked happy. Tilly's head turned, following her sister as though she could see. She looked impatient.

Betsey opened the door of the kitchen cupboard and got out a book. The doctor knew now where his book was, and he had promised Tilly to bring her others by the same author. One was called "From the Earth to the Moon," another "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea." But Tilly knew there was no book like this in the world and she meant to ask Betsey to read it again, and perhaps again. Her necessity knew no consideration for others; she would take all the blame for Betsey's sin, if there were blame; but Betsey must read.

"I'm ready," she said. The smile on her face was beatific.

Betsey opened the book. Ignoring one of the unities, the author had brought the villainous Ivan into the foreground of the narrative. Himself disguised as the courier of the Czar, he had entered the besieged city and was about to betray it. Upon him, in a room of the grand duke's palace, having escaped the burning river, came the real courier led by his faithful maiden. In terror, Betsey laid the book upon her knee.

"Now everything is at an end," she warned her sister. "Remember, he cannot see, and here is this wicked Ivan, who can see. What can he do?" Her face was pale. "You must be prepared, sister."

Tilly clasped her hands.

"Go on," she commanded. "I'm ready."

Betsey's eyes traveled down the page.

"Oh, sister!" she cried sharply.

"What is it?" asked Tilly.

"Oh, listen!"

"Go on!" urged Tilly.

"'Ivan uttered a cry,'" read Betsey. "'A sudden light flashed across his brain. 'He sees!' he exclaimed. 'He sees!' and like a wild beast trying to retreat into its den, step by step, he drew back to the edge of the room.'"

"He's not blind, then?" gasped Tilly. "But it said he was blind!"

Betsey read on.

"'Stabbed to the heart, the wretched Ivan fell.'"

"But how—"

Betsey lifted her hand for silence. Here were medical words she could not pronounce, but she could give the blessed sense of what she saw.

"Listen once! When they held the hot sword before his eyes, Tilly, he was crying to think of his poor mother and his tears saved his eyesight."

"Oh, I am thankful to God," cried Tilly. "Oh, read that part again, dear sister."

Betsey looked out the window; she needed, suddenly, a wider view than she could get across the kitchen, broad as it was. She looked out the window to the east, then out the window to the west. She rose and walked first to the one, then to the other.

"Oh, do read it again!" besought Tilly. "Just once, sister. I'll ask for no more. Oh, please!"

Betsey gazed out as though at some strange phenomenon. There was a truly strange phenomenon to be seen.

"Oh, I would like to hear it again," begged Tilly. When Betsey did not answer she was terrified. "Why don't you speak to me, Betsey?"

Another person spoke for Betsey. The door opened and the two Stauffer sisters came in. They were about the same age as the Shindledeckers; and like them, one was tall and stout and the

other tall and thin. From under their black bonnets they looked out, at once eager and guilty and excited.

"We came—" began one, and looked at her sister.

"We came to see how that fine man got through," finished the sister. "We came to see if he is yet alive. It's surely no sin!"

Betsey stood looking at them and then out the window. Utterly bewildered, Tilly sat turning her bandaged face first in one direction then in the other.

"Spare your wraps," invited Betsey pleasantly. She looked across the fields to the south and saw Eleazar Herr approaching with his long stride, and down the road to the east and saw six Erlenbaughs walking in procession, and up the road to the west and saw William Hershey's heavily laden buggy. If she was not mistaken, Mary was in it, and the baby and the little boys.

Her heart swelled; William's approach removed her last lingering sense of wrong-doing. It had been delightful to have Tilly hang upon her words; it had been thrilling to hold the Improved New Mennonite congregation spellbound; now she would have both pleasures in one. She would make these people sad and then how happy! The muscles of her arms tingled as though preparing for dramatic gestures.

"Wait once a little," she said, addressing Tilly. "Then I will begin again in the beginning."

*Bred in the Bone, 1925*

# How I Found America

ANZIA YEZIERSKA

Every breath I drew was a breath of fear, every shadow a stifling shock, every footfall struck on my heart like the heavy boot of the Cossack. On a low stool in the middle of the only room in our mud hut sat my father, his red beard falling over the Book of Isaiah, open before him. On the tile stove, on the benches that were our beds, even on the earthen floor, sat the neighbors' children, learning from him the ancient poetry of the Hebrew race. As he chanted, the children repeated:

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness,  
Prepare ye the way of the Lord.  
Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.  
Every valley shall be exalted,  
And every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
And the crooked shall be made straight,  
And the rough places plain,  
And the glory of God shall be revealed,  
And all flesh shall see it together.

Undisturbed by the swaying and chanting of teacher and pupils, old Kakah, our speckled hen, with her brood of chicks, strutted and pecked at the potato-peelings that fell from my mother's lap as she prepared our noon meal.

I stood at the window watching the road, lest the Cossack come upon us unawares to enforce the ukase of the czar, which would tear the last bread from our mouths: "No *chadir* (Hebrew school) shall be held in a room used for cooking and sleeping."

With one eye I watched ravenously my mother cutting chunks of black bread. At last the potatoes were ready. She poured them out of an iron pot into a wooden bowl and placed them in the center of the table.

Instantly the swaying and chanting ceased. The children rushed forward. The fear of the Cossack was swept away from my heart by the fear that the children would get my potato, and deserting my post, with a shout of joy I seized my portion and bit a huge mouthful of mealy delight.

At that moment the door was driven open by the blow of an iron heel. The Cossack's whip swished through the air. Screaming,

we scattered. The children ran out—our livelihood with them.

“*Oi weh!*” wailed my mother, clutching at her breast, “is there a God over us and sees all this?”

With grief-glazed eyes my father muttered a broken prayer as the Cossack thundered the ukase: “A thousand-ruble fine, or a year in prison, if you are ever found again teaching children where you’re eating and sleeping.”

“*Gottuniu!*” then pleaded my mother, “would you tear the last skin from our bones? Where else should we be eating and sleeping? Or should we keep *chadir* in the middle of the road? Have we houses with separate rooms like the czar?”

Ignoring my mother’s protests, the Cossack strode out of the hut. My father sank into a chair, his head bowed in the silent grief of the helpless.

My mother wrung her hands.

“God from the world, is there no end to our troubles? When will the earth cover me and my woes?”

I watched the Cossack disappear down the road. All at once I saw the whole village running toward us. I dragged my mother to the window to see the approaching crowd.

“*Gevalt!* What more is falling over our heads?” she cried in alarm.

Masheh Mindel, the water-carrier’s wife, headed a wild procession. The baker, the butcher, the shoemaker, the tailor, the goat-herd, the workers in the fields, with their wives and children pressed toward us through a cloud of dust.

Masheh Mindel, almost fainting, fell in front of the doorway.

“A letter from America!” she gasped.

“A letter from America!” echoed the crowd as they snatched the letter from her and thrust it into my father’s hands.

“Read, read!” they shouted tumultuously.

My father looked through the letter, his lips uttering no sound. In breathless suspense the crowd gazed at him. Their eyes shone with wonder and reverence for the only man in the village who could read. Masheh Mindel crouched at his feet, her neck stretched toward him to catch each precious word of the letter.

To my worthy wife, Masheh Mindel, and to my loving son, Sushkah Feivel, and to my darling daughter, the apple of my eye, the pride of my life, Tzipkeleh!

Long years and good luck on you! May the blessings from heaven fall over your beloved heads and save you from all harm!

First I come to tell you that I am well and in good health. May I hear the same from you!

Secondly, I am telling you that my sun is beginning to shine in America. I am becoming a person—a business man. I have for myself a stand in the most crowded part of America, where people are as thick as flies and every day is like market-day at a fair. My business is from bananas and apples. The day begins with my push-cart full of fruit, and the day never ends before I can count up at least two dollars' profit. That means four rubles. Stand before your eyes, I, Gedalyah Mindel, four rubles a day; twenty-four rubles a week!

“Gedalyah Mindel, the water-carrier, twenty-four rubles a week!” The words leaped like fire in the air.

We gazed at his wife, Masheh Mindel, a dried-out bone of a woman.

“Masheh Mindel, with a husband in America, Masheh Mindel, the wife of a man earning twenty-four rubles a week! The sky is falling to the earth!”

We looked at her with new reverence. Already she was a being from another world. The dead, sunken eyes became alive with light. The worry for bread that had tightened the skin of her cheekbones was gone. The sudden surge of happiness filled out her features, flushing her face as with wine. The two starved children clinging to her skirts, dazed with excitement, only dimly realized their good fortune in the envious glances of the others. But the letter went on:

Thirdly, I come to tell you, white bread and meat I eat every day, just like the millionaires. Fourthly, I have to tell you that I am no more Gedalyah Mindel. *Mister Mindel* they call me in America. Fifthly, Masheh Mindel and my dear children, in America there are no mud huts where cows and chickens and people live all together. I have for myself a separate room, with a closed door, and before any one can come to me, he must knock, and I can say, “Come in,” or “Stay out,” like a king in a palace. Lastly, my darling family and people of the vilage of Sukovoly, there is no czar in America.

My father paused. The hush was stifling. “No czar—no czar in America!” Even the little babies repeated the chant, “No czar in America!”

In America they ask everybody who should be the President. And I, Gedalyah Mindel, when I take out my citizen's papers, will have as much to say who shall be our next President as Mr. Rockefeller, the greatest millionaire. Fifty rubles I am sending you for your ship-ticket to America. And may all Jews who suffer in Golluth from ukases and pogroms live yet to lift up their heads like me, Gedalyah Mindel, in America.

Fifty rubles! A ship-ticket to America! That so much good luck should fall on one head! A savage envy bit us. Gloomy darts from narrowed eyes stabbed Masheh Mindel. Why should not we, too, have a chance to get away from this dark land! has not every heart the same hunger for America, the same longing to live and laugh and breathe like a free human being? America is for all. Why should only Masheh Mindel and her children have a chance to the New World?

Murmuring and gesticulating, the crowd dispersed. Every one knew every one else's thought—how to get to America. What could they pawn? From where could they borrow for a ship-ticket?

Silently, we followed my father back into the hut from which the Cossack had driven us a while before. We children looked from mother to father and from father to mother.

"*Gottunieu!* the czar himself is pushing us to America by this last ukase." My mother's face lighted up the hut like a lamp.

"*Meshugeneh Yideneh!*" admonished my father. "Always your head in the air. What—where—America? With what money? Can dead people lift themselves up to dance?"

"Dance?" The samovar and the brass pots reëchoed my mother's laughter. "I could dance myself over the waves of the ocean to America."

In amazed delight at my mother's joy, we children rippled and chuckled with her. My father paced the room, his face dark with dread for the morrow.

"Empty hands, empty pockets; yet it dreams itself in you—America," he said.

"Who is poor who has hopes on America?" flaunted my mother.

"Sell my red-quilted petticoat that grandmother left for my dowry," I urged in excitement.

"Sell the feather-beds, sell the samovar," chorused the children.

"Sure, we can sell everything—the goat and all the winter things," added my mother. "It must be always summer in America."

I flung my arms around my brother, and he seized Bessie by the curls, and we danced around the room, crazy with joy.

"Beggars!" said my laughing mother. "Why are you so happy with yourselves? How will you go to America without a shirt on your back, without shoes on your feet?"

But we ran out into the road, shouting and singing:

"We'll sell everything we got; we're going to America. White bread and meat we'll eat every day in America, in America!"

That very evening we brought Berel Zalman, the usurer, and showed him all our treasures, piled up in the middle of the hut.

"Look! All these fine feather-beds, Berel Zalman!" urged my mother. "This grand fur coat came from Nijny itself. My grandfather bought it at the fair."

I held up my red-quilted petticoat, the supreme sacrifice of my ten-year-old life. Even my father shyly pushed forward the samovar.

"It can hold enough tea for the whole village," he declared.

"Only a hundred rubles for them all!" pleaded my mother, "only enough to lift us to America! Only one hundred little rubles!"

"A hundred rubles! *Pfui!*" sniffed the pawnbroker. "Forty is overpaid. Not even thirty is it worth."

But, coaxing and cajoling, my mother got a hundred rubles out of him.

Steerage, dirty bundles, foul odors, seasick humanity; but I saw and heard nothing of the foulness and ugliness about me. I floated in showers of sunshine; visions upon visions of the New World opened before me. From lip to lip flowed the golden legend of the golden country:

"In America you can say what you feel, you can voice your thoughts in the open streets without fear of a Cossack."

"In America is a home for everybody. The land is your land, not, as in Russia, where you feel yourself a stranger in the village where you were born and reared, the village in which your father and grandfather lie buried."

"Everybody is with everybody alike in America. Christians and Jews are brothers together."

"An end to the worry for bread, an end to the fear of the bosses over you. Everybody can do what he wants with his life in America."

"There are no high or low in America. Even the President holds hands with Gedalyah Mindel."

"Plenty for all. Learning flows free, like milk and honey."

"Learning flows free." The words painted pictures in my mind. I saw before me free schools, free colleges, free libraries, where I could learn and learn and keep on learning. In our village was a school, but only for Christian children. In the schools of America I'd lift up my head and laugh and dance, a child with other children. Like a bird in the air, from sky to sky, from star to star, I'd soar and soar.

"Land! land!" came the joyous shout. All crowded and pushed on deck. They strained and stretched to get the first glimpse of the "golden country," lifting their children on their shoulders that they might see beyond them. Men fell on their knees to pray. Women hugged their babies and wept. Children danced. Strangers embraced and kissed like old friends. Old men and old women had in their eyes a look of young people in love. Age-old visions sang themselves in me, songs of freedom of an oppressed people. America! America!

Between buildings that loomed like mountains we struggled with our bundles, spreading around us the smell of the steerage. Up Broadway, under the bridge, and through the swarming streets of the Ghetto, we followed Gedalyah Mindel.

I looked about the narrow streets of squeezed-in stores and houses, ragged clothes, dirty bedding oozing out of the windows, ash-cans and garbage-cans cluttering the sidewalks. A vague sadness pressed down my heart, the first doubt of America.

"Where are the green fields and open spaces in America?" cried my heart. "Where is the golden country of my dreams?" A loneliness for the fragrant silence of the woods that lay beyond our mud hut welled up in my heart, a longing for the soft, responsive earth of our village streets. All about me was the hardness of brick and stone, the smells of crowded poverty.

"Here's your house, with separate rooms like a palace," said Gedalyah Mindel, and flung open the door of a dingy, airless flat.

"*Oi weh!*" cried my mother in dismay. "Where's the sunshine in America?" She went to the window and looked out at the blank wall of the next house. "*Gottunieu!* Like in a grave so dark!"

"It ain't so dark; it's only a little shady," said Gedalyah Mindel, and lighted the gas. "Look only!"—he pointed with pride to the dim gaslight—"No candles, no kerosene lamps, in America. You turn on a screw, and put to it a match, and you got it light like with sunshine."

Again the shadow fell over me, again the doubt of America.

In America were rooms without sunlight; rooms to sleep in, to eat in, to cook in, but without sunshine, and Gedalyah Mindel was happy. Could I be satisfied with just a place to sleep in and eat in, and a door to shut people out, to take the place of sunlight? Or would I always need the sunlight to be happy? And where was there a place in America for me to play? I looked out into the alley below, and saw pale-faced children scrambling in the gutter. "Where is America?" cried my heart.

My eyes were shutting themselves with sleep. Blindly I felt for the buttons on my dress; and buttoning, I sank back in sleep again—the deadweight sleep of utter exhaustion.

"Heart of mine," my mother's voice moaned above me, "father is already gone an hour. You know how they'll squeeze from you a nickel for every minute you're late. Quick only!"

I seized my bread and herring and tumbled down the stairs and out into the street. I ate running, blindly pressing through the hurrying throngs of workers, my haste and fear choking every mouthful. I felt a strangling in my throat as I neared the sweat-shop prison; all my nerves screwed together into iron hardness to endure the day's torture.

For an instant I hesitated as I faced the grated windows of the old building. Dirt and decay cried out from every crumbling brick. In the maw of the shop raged around me the roar and the clatter, the merciless grind, of the pounding machines. Half-maddened, half-deadened, I struggled to think, to feel, to remember. What am I? Who am I? Why am I here? I struggled in vain, bewildered and lost in a whirlpool of noise. "America—America, where was America?" it cried in my heart.

Then came the factory whistle, the slowing down of the machines, the shout of release hailing the noon hour. I woke as from a tense nightmare, a weary waking to pain. In the dark chaos of my brain reason began to dawn. In my stifled heart feelings began to pulse. The wound of my wasted life began to throb and ache. With my childhood choked with drudgery, must my youth, too, die un-lived?

Here were the odor of herring and garlic, the ravenous munching of food, laughter and loud, vulgar jokes. Was it only I who was so wretched? I looked at those around me. Were they happy or only insensible to their slavery? How could they laugh and joke? Why were they not torn with rebellion against this galling

grind, the crushing, deadening movements of the body, where only hands live, and hearts and brains must die?

I felt a touch on my shoulder and looked up. It was Yetta Solomon, from the machine next to mine.

"Here's your tea."

I stared at her half-hearing.

"Ain't you going to eat nothing?"

"*Oi weh*, Yetta! I can't stand it!" The cry broke from me. "I didn't come to America to turn into a machine. I came to America to make from myself a person. Does America want only my hands, only the strength of my body, not my heart, not my feelings, my thoughts?"

"Our heads ain't smart enough," said Yetta, practically. "We ain't been to school, like the American-born."

"What for did I come to America but to go to school, to learn, to think, to make something beautiful from my life?"

"'Sh! 'Sh! The boss! the boss!" came the warning whisper.

A sudden hush fell over the shop as the boss entered. He raised his hand. There was breathless silence. The hard, red face with the pig's eyes held us under its sickening spell. Again I saw the Cossack and heard him thunder the ukase. Prepared for disaster, the girls paled as they cast at one another sidelong, frightened glances.

"Hands," he addressed us, fingering the gold watch-chain that spread across his fat stomach, "it's slack in the other trades, and I can get plenty girls begging themselves to work for half what you're getting; only I ain't a skinner. I always give my hands a show to earn their bread. From now on I'll give you fifty cents a dozen shirts instead of seventy-five, but I'll give you night-work, so you needn't lose nothing." And he was gone.

The stillness of death filled the shop. Everyone felt the heart of the other bleed with her own helplessness. A sudden sound broke the silence. A woman sobbed chokingly. It was Balah Rifkin, a widow with three children.

"*Oi weh!*"—she tore at her scrawny neck,—“the bloodsucker! the thief! How will I give them to eat, my babies, my hungry little lambs!"

"Why do we let him choke us?"

"Twenty-five cents less on a dozen—how will we be able to live?"

"He tears the last skin from our bones."

"Why didn't nobody speak up to him?"

Something in me forced me forward. I forgot for the moment how my whole family depended on my job. I forgot that my father was out of work and we had received a notice to move for unpaid rent. The helplessness of the girls around me drove me to strength.

"I'll go to the boss," I cried, my nerves quivering with fierce excitement. "I'll tell him Balah Rifkin has three hungry mouths to feed."

Pale, hungry faces thrust themselves toward me, thin, knotted hands reached out, starved bodies pressed close about me.

"Long years on you!" cried Balah Rifkin, drying her eyes with a corner of her shawl.

"Tell him about my old father and me, his only bread-giver," came from Bessie Sopolsky, a gaunt-faced girl with a hacking cough.

"And I got no father or mother, and four of them younger than me hanging on my neck." Jennie Feist's beautiful young face was already scarred with the gray worries of age.

America, as the oppressed of all lands have dreamed America to be, and America as it is, flashed before me, a banner of fire. Behind me I felt masses pressing, thousands of immigrants; thousands upon thousands crushed by injustice, lifted me as on wings.

I entered the boss's office without a shadow of fear. I was not I; the wrongs of my people burned through me till I felt the very flesh of my body a living flame of rebellion. I faced the boss.

"We can't stand it," I cried. "Even as it is we're hungry. Fifty cents a dozen would starve us. Can you, a Jew, tear the bread from another Jew's mouth?"

"You fresh mouth, you! Who are you to learn me my business?"

"Weren't you yourself once a machine slave, your life in the hands of your boss?"

"You loafer! Money for nothing you want! The minute they begin to talk English they get flies in their nose. A black year on you, trouble-maker! I'll have no smart heads in my shop! Such freshness! Out you get! Out from my shop!"

Stunned and hopeless, the wings of my courage broken, I groped my way back to them—back to eager, waiting faces, back to the crushed hearts aching with mine.

As I opened the door, they read our defeat in my face.

"Girls,"—I held out my hands,—“he's fired me.” My voice died in the silence. Not a girl stirred. Their heads only bent closer over their machines.

"Here, you, get yourself out of here!" the boss thundered at

me. "Bessie Sopolsky and you, Balah Rifkin, take out her machine into the hall. I want no big-mouthed *Americanerins* in my shop."

Bessie Sopolsky and Balah Rifkin, their eyes black with tragedy, carried out my machine. Not a hand was held out to me, not a face met mine. I felt them shrink from me as I passed them on my way out.

In the street I found I was crying. The new hope that had flowed in me so strongly bled out of my veins. A moment before, our unity had made me believe us so strong, and now I saw each alone, crushed, broken. What were they all but crawling worms, servile grubbers for bread?

And then in the very bitterness of my resentment the hardness broke in me. I saw the girls through their own eyes, as if I were inside of them. What else could they have done? Was not an immediate crust of bread for Balah Rifkin's children more urgent than truth, more vital than honor? Could it be that they ever had dreamed of America as I had dreamed? Had their faith in America wholly died in them? Could my faith be killed as theirs had been?

Gasping from running, Yetta Solomon flung her arms around me.

"You golden heart! I sneaked myself out from the shop only to tell you I'll come to see you tonight. I'd give the blood from under my nails for you, only I got to run back. I got to hold my job. My mother—"

I hardly saw or heard her. My senses were stunned with my defeat. I walked on in a blind daze, feeling that any moment I would drop in the middle of the street from sheer exhaustion. Every hope I had clung to, every human stay, every reality, was torn from under me. Was it then only a dream, a mirage of the hungry-hearted people in the desert lands of oppression, this age-old faith in America?

Again I saw the mob of dusty villagers crowding about my father as he read the letter from America, their eager faces thrust out, their eyes blazing with the same hope, the same faith, that had driven me on. Had the starved villagers of Sukovoly lifted above their sorrows a mere rainbow vision that led them—where? Where? To the stifling submission of the sweat-shop or the desperation of the streets!

"God! God!" My eyes sought the sky, praying, "where—where is America?"

Times changed. The sweat-shop conditions that I had lived through had become a relic of the past. Wages had doubled, tripled, and went up higher and higher, and the working-day became shorter and shorter. I began to earn enough to move my family uptown into a sunny, airy flat with electricity and telephone service. I even saved up enough to buy a phonograph and a piano.

My knotted nerves relaxed. At last I had become free from the worry for bread and rent, but I was not happy. A more restless discontent than ever before ate out my heart. Freedom from stomach needs only intensified the needs of my soul.

I ached and clamored for America. Higher wages and shorter hours of work, mere physical comfort, were not yet America. I had dreamed that America was a place where the heart could grow big with giving. Though outwardly I had become prosperous, life still forced me into an existence of mere getting and getting.

*Ach!* how I longed for a friend, a real American friend, some one to whom I could express the thoughts and feelings that choked me! In the Bronx, the uptown Ghetto, I felt myself farther away from the spirit of America than ever before. In the East Side the people had yet alive in their eyes the old, old dreams of America, the America that would release the age-old hunger to give; but in the prosperous Bronx good eating and good sleeping replaced the spiritual need for giving. The chase for dollars and diamonds deadened the dreams that had once brought them to America.

More and more the all-consuming need for a friend possessed me. In the street, in the cars, in the subways, I was always seeking, ceaselessly seeking for eyes, a face, the flash of a smile that would be light in my darkness.

I felt sometimes that I was only burning out my heart for a shadow, an echo, a wild dream, but I couldn't help it. Nothing was real to me but my hope of finding a friend. America was not America to me unless I could find an American that would make America real.

The hunger of my heart drove me to the night-school. Again my dream flamed. Again America beckoned. In the school there would be education, air, life for my cramped-in spirit. I would learn to think, to form the thoughts that surged formless in me. I would find the teacher that would make me articulate.

I joined the literature class. They were reading *The De Coverley Papers*. Filled with insatiate thirst, I drank in every line with the feeling that any moment I would get to the fountain-heart of

revelation. Night after night I read with tireless devotion. But of what? The manners and customs of the eighteenth century, of people two hundred years dead.

One evening, after a month's attendance, when the class had dwindled from fifty to four, and the teacher began scolding us who were present for those who were absent, my bitterness broke.

"Do you know why all the girls are dropping away from the class? It's because they have too much sense than to waste themselves on *The De Coverley Papers*. Us four girls are four fools. We could learn more in the streets. It's dirty and wrong, but it's life. What are *The De Coverley Papers*? Dry dust fit for the ash-can."

"Perhaps you had better tell the principal your ideas of the standard classics," she scoffed, white with rage.

"All right," I snapped, and hurried down to the principal's office.

I swung open the door.

"I just want to tell you why I'm leaving. I—"

"Won't you come in?" The principal rose and placed a chair for me near her desk. "Now tell me all." She leaned forward with an inviting interest.

I looked up, and met the steady gaze of eyes shining with light. In a moment all my anger fled. *The De Coverley Papers* were forgotten. The warm friendliness of her face held me like a familiar dream. I couldn't speak. It was as if the sky suddenly opened in my heart.

"Do go on," she said, and gave me a quick nod. "I want to hear."

The repression of centuries rushed out of my heart. I told her everything—of the mud hut in Sukovoly where I was born, of the czar's pogroms, of the constant fear of the Cossack, of Gedalyah Mindel's letter, of our hopes in coming to America, and my search for an American who would make America real.

"I am so glad you came to me," she said. And after a pause, "You can help me."

"Help you?" I cried. It was the first time that an American suggested that I could help her.

"Yes, indeed. I have always wanted to know more of that mysterious, vibrant life—the immigrant. You can help me know my girls. You have so much to give—"

"Give—that's what I was hungering and thirsting all these years—to give out what's in me. I was dying in the unused riches of my soul."

"I know; I know just what you mean," she said, putting her hand on mine.

My whole being seemed to change in the warmth of her comprehension. "I have a friend," it sang itself in me. "I have a friend!"

"And you are a born American?" I asked. There was none of that sure, all right look of the Americans about her.

"Yes, indeed. My mother, like so many mothers,"—and her eyebrows lifted humorously whimsical,—"claims we're descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers, and that one of our lineal ancestors came over in the *Mayflower*."

"For all your mother's pride in the Pilgrim Fathers, you yourself are as plain from the heart as an immigrant."

"Weren't the Pilgrim Fathers immigrants two hundred years ago?"

She took from her desk a book and read to me.

Then she opened her arms to me, and breathlessly I felt myself drawn to her. Bonds seemed to burst. A suffusion of light filled my being. Great choirings lifted me in space. I walked out unseeingly.

All the way home the words she read flamed before me: "We go forth all to seek America. And in the seeking we create her. In the quality of our search shall be the nature of the America that we create."

So all those lonely years of seeking and praying were not in vain. How glad I was that I had not stopped at the husk, a good job, a good living! Through my inarticulate groping and reaching out I had found the soul, the spirit of America.

*Century Magazine*, November, 1920

# Mister Morgan, a Portrait

## THE STAFF OF FORTUNE

### I

John Pierpont Morgan Jr. was born in Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, at twenty-six minutes past midnight of the sixth-seventh September, 1867. Neither the weather nor the house was appropriate. The weather was raw and gusty, overcast, with the thermometer in the sixties and a heavy fog to the west along the river—a fitting end to a wet, cold summer. The house was a borrowed house, the property of John Pierpont Morgan Jr.'s paternal aunt, Sarah, bride of a year to her remote relative, George H. Morgan. Its name was Woodcliff. Its style was carpenters' Gothic. Its aspect in its bank of humid trees above the Albany Post Road was distinctly sad.

The event caused no commotion in the local press which, indeed, ignored it. John Pierpont Morgan Jr. was the son of a large, thickset, and unprepossessing native of Hartford, Connecticut, who had put in two terms at the University of Göttingen and was reputed to have made \$53,286 in his twenty-seventh year. He was also the grandson of one Junius S. Morgan, former drygoods merchant in Boston and partner in London of the great banker and philanthropist George Peabody. But neither Junius S. Morgan nor J. Pierpont Morgan Sr. was as famous in 1867 as he was shortly to become. The great banker of the day was the financier of the Civil War, Jay Cooke. The great buccaneers were Fisks and Goulds and Vanderbilts. And the press, lacking a prophetic eye, had something better to record than the birth in a remote suburb among dank trees of the son of a thirty-year-old boy. . . .

What the stars were interested in (and Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan Sr. with them) was the future destiny of the child. And that destiny, as Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan Senior was later to learn in his consultations with Evangeline Adams, was superb—a chart such as few astrologers have ever had the fortune to behold. Jack Morgan, to be precise, was born with the sun in Virgo (a clear-thinking, discriminatory mind, unbiased by emotion, interested in many things), the moon in Sagittarius (a humane point of view, much travel, a domestic and devoted life), Uranus in Cancer (an original

and farseeing mind modified by stomach trouble), Neptune (which rules the stock market) in mid-heaven, Jupiter (meaning money) in Pisces, and a Cardinal Cross (the same Cross which appeared in 1930 and is astrologically associated with the Depression and with strains and oppositions in general) among his planets—in brief, a beautifully aspected and most fortunate chart pointing to a long and active and responsible life and a death sudden and easy.

This was a considerable burden of fate to carry back at the age of a month or so from Irvington-on-Hudson to the brownstone house at 227 Madison Avenue where J. Pierpont Morgan had set up housekeeping two years before with Frances Tracy, his second wife, the handsome, oval-faced daughter of a Utica-born lawyer. But it nowhere appears that his planetary responsibilities unduly oppressed the infant. He and his elder sister, Louisa, had other things to think about than horoscopes. By 1870, year of Juliet's birth, the family was boarding at the Mearns House near the summer place of Mrs. Morgan's parents at Highland Falls, west of the river. The Mearns House, famous for its food, was one of those upper-class American boarding houses where for \$18 to \$20 per week per person families ate together at large common tables, with the children at the lower end and the waitresses panting at the swinging doors. Mr. Morgan sat at the head of a table for twelve and little Jack, a burly youngster with a look of his father across the eyes, ate with the best of them and spent his days following a little Cuban boy of maturer years into the branches of the taller trees. But two years of boarding were enough. In 1872, a year before Anne was born, the Morgans bought Cragston down the Bear Mountain Road a bit with a fine view of the river and several hundred acres for a boy to run. And there for the better part of a decade, and save for the breaks of occasional European trips, the family passed its summers. There were Satterlees and Pells and Roes to play with. . . . There was Mr. Morgan himself chugging across the river in a twenty-foot launch and beaching it on the other side to catch his train or flagging a West Shore express below the cliffs of Cragston. And there was Miss Rhett, the governess, whose curriculum included many verses of the Bible. But chiefly there were trees and fields and summer.

And a changing world. The changes to the children were merely names and rumors but changes nevertheless. When they went to board at the Mearns House their father was already "the man who licked Jay Gould" and beefy gentlemen from Albany used occasionally to push the rocking chairs on Mearns' front porch.

At the end of that first summer their London grandfather, Junius, excellent judge of men and wines and credits, floated a 250,000,000-franc loan for the defeated French—to put himself, second only to the Rothschilds, at the summits of international finance. In 1871 their father's firm, Dabney, Morgan & Co., dissolved and their father's office moved to Tony Drexel's seven-story marble building (with elevators) at the corner of Broad and Wall. The year after the family moved into Cragston, Morgan and Drexel with their English backing forced the great Jay Cooke and his German Jewish allies to divide the refunding of the national debt. Six years later, when Jack was twelve, his father sold 250,000 shares of frightened Mr. W. H. Vanderbilt's New York Central in England at a profit to Mr. Morgan of \$3,000,000 plus a directorship. And within the next three years Grandfather Junius retired in his son's favor, the father of the four young Morgans joined the Union and the New York Yacht clubs and bought from the Phelps and the Dodges the more impressive brownstone next door to Number 227 Madison Avenue at Number 219, and the twenty-foot launch was replaced by a black-hulled, Cramp-built yacht which, with incorrigible romanticism, its owner christened the *Corsair*.

2

It was a famous man's son and a rich man's grandson who, in the fall of 1880, entered St. Paul's School at Concord, New Hampshire, where parents and friends were requested not to furnish the boys with pocket money except through the Rector, where boxes and packages were forbidden, and where the Reverend and very rigid Henry August Coit had for twenty-four years filled the sons of the devout with awe, Latin, and the precepts of the Protestant Episcopal Church. . . .

For four years and through four forms, while his father laid the foundations of the great Morgan empire of railroads, Jack Morgan labored at St. Paul's. His record was not brilliant. In a form of fifty-odd boys he was, in Third, Fourth, and Fifth forms, one of six or eight boys to receive Second Testimonials of the first or second grade—an equal number receiving First Testimonials ahead of him. And in a school of 275 to 280 he made no particular athletic mark. But he was well liked if shy and one of his classmates— . . . James Gore King, whom he found again at Harvard—became his closest and his lifelong friend.

The natural and inevitable consequence of St. Paul's School was and is and doubtless will continue to be Princeton or Yale or

Harvard. In Jack Morgan's case, his family having set no precedent in the matter and the Connecticut influence of his great-grandfather, the Hartford hotelkeeper, being overweighed by the Massachusetts years and the British domicile of his grandfather, the choice was Harvard. But it was not pure and unadulterated St. Paul's which the young man after a year's travel carried into Cambridge in the fall of '85. Something else, something much more important had happened to him in the interim. He had seen the West! Not, be it understood, the West of the long lands and the hard-bitten faces and the American ways. Neither Jack Morgan nor his father nor his grandfather nor the generations of . . . farmers who lay behind had ever seen that West. But the West of the Rockies and the grizzlies and the game. It came about in a curious way—the way, to be explicit, of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Mr. Morgan as a member of his vestry had invited a progressive young parson of Toronto named William Stephen Rainsford to the pulpit of his church. The parson had turned out to be six feet, three inches in height, brave enough to contradict a millionaire, and radical enough to support a dangerous revolutionary named Theodore Roosevelt. And when, in the summer of 1884, the Reverend Rainsford had mentioned a longing for the Rockies, Mr. Morgan had suggested that he take young Jack along. The result, so far as Jack was concerned, was a dead grizzly, a three-days' blizzard, and a subject of conversation which lasted him through that year and far enough into Harvard to inspire his Class Poet with the memorable lines:

Jack Morgan, the wonderful talking machine and human  
typewriter combined  
Will spout three straight hours on 'Life on the Plains' and  
eventually talk himself blind. . . .

The lines are, however, suggestive of something more than the Morgan interest in the Rockies. They are suggestive of the undergraduate estimate of the Morgan character—an estimate which jangles harshly with the current tradition. For thirty years the newspapers have presented the junior Morgan as a cross between an ogre, a Bourbon magnifico, and the Man in the Iron Mask. He has been the large and muscular millionaire with the hunched-up shoulder bones who threatens cameras with his cane. He has been the ambiguous banker with a head like Pinturricchio's bull-necked, thick-jawed Borgia Pope who stands for contemptuous capitalism in the Left cartoons. He has been the mysterious figure who comes charging at you out of the front page of a tabloid with a raincoat

over his face, the caption reading "Money King Sees Harvard Out-row Yale." He has been the ruddy landowner with the British eyebrows and the grouse-fed British jowls who shouts at reporters bobbing in small boats beside his yacht landing. He has been the man of silence whose sole authentic interview consists of two sentences, the first beginning: "I don't like being interviewed . . ." and the second ending: ". . . to keep out of the newspapers." He has been the arrogant millionaire who told the Walsh Commission, when that Senatorial body demanded his opinion of the adequacy of a \$10-a-week wage for longshoremen: "If that's all he can get and he takes it, I should say that is enough." He has been the huge and pompous shape with the cold eyes and the continually crunching jaws who is visible at four o'clock of a Wall Street afternoon wading through the stockbrokers to the open door of his car. . . . And forty-five years ago and among his Harvard classmates (Harvard classmates being no more redolent of charity than any other classmates) he was "the wonderful talking-machine and human typewriter combined" who could be counted on to hold forth on his grizzly and his blizzard for three hours running and to end up (poetic license understood) in a state of complete fog!

The two reports do not harmonize. And as between them any man with an experience of journalistic judgments and undergraduate judgments will unreservedly accept the latter—particularly where, as in Jack Morgan's case, the testimony is unanimous. Eighteen Eighty-Nine was in no sense a remarkable class. Its most distinguished graduate is Professor Irving Babbitt of Harvard and it was chiefly memorable in college for the athletic feats of Perry Trafford and for the first public appearance of John the Orangeman at the head of one of its freshman parades. But even so it was an observant class. And Jack Morgan was, to its members, a large, somewhat uncouth young man with an enormous voice who lived alone in Beck Hall, took no scholastic honors and not much exercise except a bit of cricket and an occasional pull at an oar, liked his friends (chiefly Jim King, later a New York lawyer, and James Hardy Ropes, who became a professor of divinity at Harvard) with an extremely warm and very cordial liking, paid no particular attention to those who weren't his friends, rooted enthusiastically for the university teams, expressed his opinions openly and eloquently and with heat and was, in general, as full of energy and geniality and easy, undergraduate loquaciousness as any youngster, banker's son or parson's son or grocer's son, a man would be likely to meet in the Harvard of his day. His whole record bears the

judgment out. He was a member of the usual undergraduate clubs—the Hasty Pudding, the Dickey, the Institute. He coached a Hasty Pudding play (Sheridan's *Duenna*). And he ended up in the Gas House, a "final club" which was notable then as now if not for the families of its members (in which regard Harvard opinion places it well after the Porcellian and the AD) at least for its members' undergraduate accomplishments and personal collegiate merits. Moreover the Morgan attachment to Harvard and the Harvard reciprocation of that regard were sufficient after graduation to return him to various university committees, to the Board of Overseers and eventually to the presidency of the Alumni Association. It is asserted on excellent authority that he has yet to miss a class reunion: the man who can continue to return to class reunions is neither the arrogant bully of the journalistic Morgan tradition nor the shy and retiring scholar whom Mr. Morgan's friends have on occasion presented to the public view. . . .

3

The young B. A. who in July of 1889 left Cambridge and America for a six-months' tramp in Germany may or may not have discovered what the moon was made of, but of his own future he was relatively sure. He would be a banker. And he would marry Jane Grew. The first had been decided for him by the one man whose decisions he could not ignore. And the second he had decided for himself. Jane Grew was the sister of Edward Wigglesworth Grew, a class and club-mate, and the daughter of Henry Sturgis Grew, a Boston merchant-banker with interests in the East. She was also a young lady of great charm and human wisdom. And when the German pilgrimage was over it was to Boston, an apprenticeship in the banking house of Jacob C. Rogers & Co., and a wedding in the Arlington Street Church that young Morgan returned. The wedding which took place at 12:30 on December 11, 1890, with Junius Morgan as the groomsman, Juliet and Louisa Morgan among the bridesmaids, and James Gore King among the ushers was, in the bright phrase of the *Herald* "a very gay and brilliant assemblage." And the apprenticeship, if it did no more, served to prepare the young man by easy stages for eight arduous years in his father's New York office. . . .

The education of J. Pierpont Morgan Jr., like the education of Henry Adams, was a long time in progress. And London was its greatest school. London, to the rich young American of the '90's, was the center of the earth. For America, throughout the '90's and

down indeed to the period of the War, was still, in its over-layers, confessedly provincial. American letters were as much like British letters as it was possible to make them. . . . And the same thing on a different level was true of business and society. New York bankers emulated London bankers and built the ethics of their trade upon the ancient ethics of The City. American millionaires dressed like British millionaires and married their daughters when they could to European titles. American "estates" copied English estates. American horse racing followed British horse racing. American yachts were like British yachts. American butlers differed from British butlers only in the fact that there was no difference. Certain cities like Boston and Philadelphia were English even to those last ultimate tests of loyalty, the dress of their rich women and the pipe tobacco of their well-born men. And from one end of the North Atlantic seaboard to the other the true hallmark of chic, the real guarantee of aristocracy, was a domicile, however brief, in west-end London.

If all this, however odd it may sound to post-War ears when the North Atlantic seaboard faces west instead of east, was true of the average rich man's son it was infinitely more true of young Jack Morgan. . . . Mrs. Morgan by background and training took easily to English country ways, English houses, English gardens—the whole domestic economy of a life of which the life in Boston was merely a more meager copy. And her husband found, as he must long have suspected, that the life of a gentleman and an Episcopalian could be more gracefully and naturally led in London than on Wall Street in New York. White's, the old 17th century Tory Club with its faint odor of fashion and romantic gambling still about it, had a quality which even the Somerset in Boston lacked. And the ugly, commodious house in Prince's Gate was pleasanter on any count than Madison Avenue.

The result was that the Morgans as a family, flourished. But there were other results which were to have an effect of a peculiar kind upon the Morgan career. 1898 and 1899 and particularly 1901 were the great years of the senior Morgan's life. In the first of those years Federal Steel was built up out of Illinois Steel and Minnesota Iron and Lorain Steel to compete with Carnegie; and National Tube and American Bridge were formed. In the last, that amazing Gothic structure, U. S. Steel, was put together, flying buttresses, window glass, choir, nave, and all, out of Federal Steel, Carnegie's companies, Rockefeller's Lake Superior Consolidated Iron Mines, and the Tin Plate combinations of the Moore Brothers; and the

long and costly stalemate of the Northern Pacific was fought with Hill and Morgan on one side and Harriman on the other. And in neither year was the younger Morgan at his father's side. That he knew more or less accurately what was going on is probable. But the Morgan House has long had a rule that any partner going abroad loses his authority to speak for the firm after two weeks' absence and the rule is doubtless the reflection of a practice. In any event it is certain that the younger Morgan was active neither in the gigantic consolidation which put his father temporarily at the head of U. S. industry nor in the futile and mischievous stock war which precipitated a shocking panic and did more than anything else in his father's career to point the moral of his father's financial generation. The fact is important. It means that the present Morgan, though born and bred in the Morgan *banking* tradition, never tasted blood in the Morgan buccaneering tradition. His eight years in the New York office were eight years largely of depression and railroad reorganizations in which great industrial consolidations were impossible. And the eight years in which great industrial consolidations did take place at 23 Wall were the eight years of the junior Morgan's absence. At the age (thirty-two) when his father, standing with President Ramsey of the Albany & Susquehanna at the head of the stairs leading to that railway's Albany office, was chucking Jim Fisk and a gang of Bowery hoodlums bodily into the street, young J. P. Morgan was apologizing to the senior partner of J. S. Morgan & Co. for turning up at the office in gray flannels and a boater instead of the morning coat and top coat of conventional City wear. There is more than paradox in the story. . . .

4

In 1906, a pretty well inoculated Londoner with a wife who had twice been presented at the Court of St. James's, a new son named Henry Sturgis, and a pipe with a British bowl, he returned to introduce the practice of afternoon tea at the corner of Broad and Wall. . . . Mr. Morgan thought of himself certainly as a citizen of the United States. But he frankly preferred life in England. In England his house was not broken into as 231 Madison Avenue was broken into in January of 1912. In England he was not invited, as he was invited on January 31 of the same year, to leave \$100,000 under a bush inside the Seventh Avenue entrance to Central Park on peril of his life. And in England his children did not suffer from the fear of kidnapping which obsessed eleven-year-old Harry

when in September, 1912, he returned from England accompanied by his British tutor. England was not only a more congenial, it was a safer place. When Mr. Morgan told the Austro-Hungarian Minister, Mr. Dumba, that his ideal of happiness would be an entire year in Hertfordshire he told the simple and convincing truth.

But the ideal was not then to be realized. On March 31, 1913, J. P. Morgan Sr., having painfully journeyed up the Nile in search of sunlight, died in the Grand Hotel at Rome. And J. P. Morgan Jr. became his father's residuary legatee. It was a curious legacy. . . . The paradoxical result was that the heir J. Pierpont Morgan was left with an enormous fortune and no money. And the upshot of the whole matter was that a large part of the Morgan collection in the Metropolitan, much of which had been imported from England early in 1912 to escape English death duties, was sold. The public complained. The newspapers screamed. But Mr. Morgan made no defense. The collection had been left to him with a statement that his father had intended to establish a public foundation but had been unable to do so and would leave his son free to make his own decisions. And the decision followed the necessities of the case. The Fragonard Room and the magnificent Chinese porcelains went to Duveen. The elder Morgan's English country place, Dover House at Roehampton, its 140 acres, and its registered Jerseys were sold. But the Morgan Library, established in 1905, was held intact with its thirty-seven shelves of Bibles, its Assyrian and Babylonian seals, its Egyptian and Greek papyri, its Coptic texts, its lovely illuminated manuscripts, its Blake drawings, its manuscripts of Shelley and Dr. Johnson and Swift and Scott and Napoleon, and its famous librarian, Miss Belle da Costa Greene. Books and manuscripts had become, in some curious way, the passion of the younger Morgan's life. And whatever might happen to the paintings and porcelains his father had so spacioisly collected he was determined that the library should not go. For eleven years he held it. And in February, 1924, he devoted it to the use of scholars as a memorial to his father. The value of buildings and collections was then put at \$7,000,000 and the endowment at \$1,500,000 while the collections constituted, in the conservative estimate of Miss Greene, "one of the most significant collections of interrelated original material in America." Since the establishment of the foundation New York tabloids with more interest in copy than in scholarship have attempted to make capital out of the restrictions which limit a tax-free public library to the use only of qualified persons. But Mr. Morgan himself had forestalled them when the gift was made. "You cannot," said he,

“have large numbers of people going over these books. Think of it, one soiled thumb could undo the work of 900 years and a misplaced cough would be a disaster.”

But the chief and principal bequest of the elder Morgan to his son was J. P. Morgan & Co. . . . The Morgans were bankers again. But bankers with a difference. The elder Morgan had established for his House a prestige built upon a curious mixture of fear and respect but a prestige which owed nothing to anyone but Morgan. The younger Morgan and the War between them had built up a different prestige—a prestige based upon respect without fear but a prestige which owed almost everything to the relations of the House to the great nations of Europe. In 1907 Morgan's was powerful because J. P. Morgan headed it. In 1920 Morgan's was powerful because it was the banker for England and for France.

And that change in the character of the firm had its effect also upon the firm's fortunes. Business came crowding in upon it. All the nations of the earth wanted American money and wanted American money through Morgan's. Until Kreuger displaced the firm as banker to the French in 1928, Morgan's rode the international world. Between January 1, 1920, and December 15, 1931, the firm floated thirty-nine separate loans for Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Cuba, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Switzerland, and some of their subdivisions totaling \$1,807,578,000 on which it made a gross profit of \$10,313,919.71 and a net profit of nine and a half millions. In addition to which there were seven issues for great foreign corporations totaling \$68,000,000 and yielding a net profit of better than half a million. These loans, moreover, like the great bulk of loans made by the partners during the period, were the cream of the business. They were the best loans of their kind available and they have stood up even through the depression. None of the foreign loans made by Morgan's from January 1, 1919, to May, 1933, are in default, 40 per cent have been redeemed or retired, 33 per cent of those remaining were selling above offering price in May, 1933, and the average decline was only  $13\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. The extraordinary record of all Morgan bond offerings during the post-War period, as testified to by Mr. Whitney in Washington, may well be a witness to the sound judgment and excellent banking sense of the firm. But even more it is evidence of the extent to which the best loans of the period were offered to J. P. Morgan & Co. to make. . . .

Mr. Morgan is today at sixty-six the undoubted master of J. P. Morgan & Co. He is in his New York office less than seven months out of the year and even when there he arrives late and leaves early. He has been known to defer a sailing because his tulips were about to bloom. He loves to putter around in the sunken English rose garden his wife, who died of sleeping sickness eight years ago, designed at Matinicock Point. His tulips have won prizes at the Nassau County Show and in New York year after year, and it is his annual practice to visit the New York Show with his superintendent at the crack of dawn on the opening day. He has a great knowledge of his wife's lace collections, now divided among his daughters. He spends much time in the Morgan Library and corresponds with Pope Pius XI, who is a great authority on Coptic texts. When the Morgan manuscripts were exhibited at the Public Library in 1924 he conducted a personal tour of the cases, explaining as he went: "That is the manuscript of Shelley's *Indian Serenade*. That was found in his pocket when they recovered his body. That's why the ink is so pale. It was soaked in water. I'm afraid it's getting paler. . . . Here's Marryat. I don't know whether they like Marryat nowadays [he is one of Ernest Hemingway's great admirations] but I did when I was a boy. . . ." He loves his *Corsair IV*, launched at Bath, Maine, in 1930 with her 6,000 horsepower and her clipper bow and her imported India teak and her big lounge with the open fireplace and the beamed ceiling and his own two suites, one on the main deck and the other on the boat deck forward, and he has taken his friend Dr. Cosmo Lang, the Archbishop of Canterbury, cruising in her off the Dalmatian Coast and as far east as Palestine. He likes to drive through the South with his secretary-chauffeur, Charles Robertson, reading the signs along the roadside as he goes. He dominates the American Episcopal Church, having financed the limited edition of the third revision of the American Book of Common Prayer and served long as a vestryman of his father's old church, St. George's (but his political duties weigh more lightly: he registered in Glen Cove in May, 1933, for the first time in fifteen years). He gives his own Foochow tea as a Christmas present to his friends. And the British Isles still hold him. At Wall Hall he is a Tory squire with the whole of Aldenham Village as his property except the ancient church, and with all the villagers in his employ, each supplied with a rent-free house and registered milk and free medical treatment and

an old-age pension and membership in the Aldenham Parish Social Club. While at Gannochy, his hunting lodge in Scotland, he is the hunting laird with forty servants in the season for his thirty-room house and carload after carload of "guns" and gifts of the "Morgan tartan" (a variety of native tweed, the Morgans as Welshmen having no proper tartan) to his guests and the admiration of his Scots servants and the frank dislike of his neighbors nearby in Edzell Village who, lacking the servility of the English villager, remark grimly: "A man may be rich and weel respectit but he'll no be respectit only because he's rich, not in Scotland." But in spite of Tory squiring and sea-voyaging and tulip-growing and Christmas-giving, Mr. Morgan remains the master of his House. He lets other men attend to details. He lets other men make decisions. But the ultimate destiny of the House is his: under the articles of partnership no partner can remain whom Mr. Morgan wishes out, but no partner whom Mr. Morgan wished out would care to remain if he could. . . .

Mr. Morgan's horoscope was prophetic. He is a very fortunate man—a man fortunate in the sense that those nations are fortunate which have no history and those men blessed whose two-volume biographies are the pious labor of their friends. The press has attempted at one time or another to create a mystery of Mr. Morgan. There is no mystery of Mr. Morgan. There is merely a mystification. Had he himself and his associates not practiced a highly publicized ritual of privacy—had they borne in mind the elder Morgan's warning that "the time is coming when all business will have to be done with glass pockets"—the present head of the House would have attracted less interest and suffered far less embarrassment. For he is in reality a very unexciting man, a man remarkable neither for rapacity and imagination and insolence as was his father nor for the opposite qualities of the ordinary inheritor, but merely for the once simple virtues of personal integrity and personal honor and personal loyalty—virtues which, like Shakespeare's candle, shine only because the world is naughty. In a generation of financiers so clever, so subtle, and so unprincipled that they brought the Federal Securities Act upon their heads, Mr. Morgan fairly glows with that fundamental private honesty of which a Federal Securities Act can enforce only a very feeble copy. But beyond those basic, invaluable but negative gifts of character and a certain force of stubborn will Mr. Morgan gives off but little light. No one has ever seriously contended that he was a man of intellect: his degree of erudition is noticeable, as his knowledge of his own collections is

remarked, because any degree of erudition among American bankers is rare and because most American millionaires collect with no knowledge of their collections whatever. Neither has any man ever pictured Mr. Morgan as a leader in his generation: both chronologically and geographically he is out of touch with his time; the West is to him merely a section of the country where grizzlies can no longer be shot; London remains the capital of the civilized world and the medieval business of private banking is an inviolable business with which there is nothing whatsoever wrong. But Mr. Morgan himself would probably be the last to pretend either to an understanding of his age or to the possession of an important mind. He has modeled himself upon the type of the British investment banker with his virtues of integrity as well as his vices of limitation. And it is probably a sufficient reward for J. Pierpont Morgan's only son to know that his competitors on Wall Street will "trust Jack Morgan behind their backs as far as any man living." J. Pierpont Morgan in his Hartford grave must sometimes smile.

*Fortune*, August, 1933

# Riveters in Manhattan

## THE STAFF OF FORTUNE

The trouble with all the talk about the decay of artisanship is that it is true. It has always been true. It was true when the last wattle-weaver died and they took to building houses of brick. And it will be true when the tools and machinery of the contemporary arts are replaced by atomic explosions. It is so true that no one takes time to remark that the decay of one kind of artisanship is almost always caused by the growth of another. Modern carpenters would have been laughed off one of the Adam Brothers' jobs. But a riveter can't be expected to break his heart over that.

The most curious fact about a riveter's skill is that he is not one man but four: "heater," "catcher," "bucker-up," and "gun-man." The gang is the unit. Riveters are hired and fired as gangs, work in gangs, and learn in gangs. If one member of a gang is absent on a given morning, the entire gang is replaced. A gang may continue to exist after its original members have all succumbed to slippery girders or the business end of a pneumatic hammer or to a foreman's zeal or merely to the temptations of life on earth. And the skill of the gang will continue with it. Men overlap each other in service and teach each other what they know. The difference between a gang which can drive 525 inch-and-an-eighth rivets in a working day and a gang which can drive 250 is a difference of co-ordination and smoothness. You learn how not to make mistakes and how not to waste time. You learn how to heat a rivet and how not to overheat it, how to throw it accurately but not too hard, how to drive it and when to stop driving it, and precisely how much you can drink in a cold wind or a July sun without losing your sense of the width and balance of a wooden plank. And all these things, or most of them, an older hand can tell you.

Eagle's Gang, a veteran of the Forty Wall Street job, is reputed in the trade to be one of the best gangs in the city. The gang takes its name from its heater and organizer, E. Eagle, a native of Baltimore. It is the belief of timekeepers, foremen, and the leaders of other gangs that Mr. Eagle is a man of property in his home town and indulges in the sport of riveting for mysterious reasons. There are also myths about the gun-man and the buckler-up, brothers

named Bowers from some South Carolina town. They are said never to speak. Even in a profession where no man is able to speak, their silence stands out. The catcher is George Smith, a New Yorker. There are no stories about George.

The actual process of riveting is simple enough—in description. Rivets are carried to the job by the rivet boy, a riveter's apprentice whose ambition it is to replace one of the members of the gang—which one, he leaves to luck. The rivets are dumped into a keg beside a small coke furnace. The furnace stands on a platform of loose boards roped to steel girders which may or may not have been riveted. If they have not been riveted there will be a certain amount of play in the temporary bolts. The furnace is tended by the heater or passer. He wears heavy clothes and gloves to protect him from the flying sparks and intense heat of his work, and he holds a pair of tongs about a foot-and-a-half long in his right hand. When a rivet is needed, he whirls the furnace blower until the coke is white-hot, picks up a rivet with his tongs, and drives it into the coals. His skill as a heater appears in his knowledge of the exact time necessary to heat the steel. If he overheats it, it will flake, and the flakes will permit the rivet to turn in its hole. And a rivet which gives in its hole is condemned by the inspectors.

When the heater judges that his rivet is right, he turns to face the catcher, who may be above or below him or fifty or sixty or eighty feet away on the same floor level with the naked girders between. There is no means of handing the rivet over. It must be thrown. And it must be accurately thrown. And if the floor beams of the floor above have been laid so that a flat trajectory is essential, it must be thrown with considerable force. The catcher is therefore armed with a smallish, battered tin can, called a cup, with which to catch the red-hot steel. Various patented cups have been put upon the market from time to time but they have made little headway. Catchers prefer the ancient can.

The catcher's position is not exactly one which a sportsman catching rivets for pleasure would choose. He stands upon a narrow platform of loose planks laid over needle beams and roped to a girder near the connection upon which the gang is at work. There are live coils of pneumatic tubing for the rivet gun around his feet. If he moves more than a step or two in any direction, he is gone, and if he loses his balance backward he is apt to end up at street level without time to walk. And the object is to catch a red-hot iron rivet weighing anywhere from a quarter of a pound to a pound and a half and capable, if he lets it pass, of drilling an automobile

radiator or a man's skull 500 feet below as neatly as a shank of shrapnel. Why more rivets do not fall is the great mystery of skyscraper construction. The only reasonable explanation offered to date is the reply of an erector's foreman who was asked what would happen if a catcher on the Forty Wall Street job let a rivet go by him around lunch hour. "Well," said the foreman, "he's not supposed to."

There is practically no exchange of words among riveters. Not only are they averse to conversation, which would be reasonable enough in view of the effect they have on the conversation of others, but they are averse to speech in any form. The catcher faces the heater. He holds his tin can up. The heater swings his tongs, releasing one handle. The red iron arcs through the air in one of those parabolas so much admired by the stenographers in the neighboring windows. And the tin can clanks.

Meantime the gun-man and the buckler-up have prepared the connection—aligning the two holes, if necessary, with a drift pin driven by a sledge or by a pneumatic hammer—and removed the temporary bolts. They, too, stand on loose-roped boards with the column or the beam between them. When the rivet strikes the catcher's can, he picks it out with a pair of tongs held in his right hand, knocks it sharply against the steel to shake off the glowing flakes, and rams it into the hole, an operation which is responsible for his alternative title of sticker. Once the rivet is in place, the buckler-up braces himself with his dolly bar, a short heavy bar of steel, against the capped end of the rivet. On outside wall work he is sometimes obliged to hold on by one elbow with his weight out over the street and the jar of the riveting shaking his precarious balance. And the gun-man lifts his pneumatic hammer to the rivet's other end.

The gun-man's work is the hardest work, physically, done by the gang. The hammers in use for steel construction work are supposed to weigh around thirty pounds and actually weigh about thirty-five. They must not only be held against the rivet end, but held there with the gun-man's entire strength, and for a period of forty to sixty seconds. (A rivet driven too long will develop a collar inside the new head.) And the concussion to the ears and to the arms during that period is very great. The whole platform shakes and the vibration can be felt down the column thirty stories below. It is common practice for the catcher to push with the gun-man and for the gun-man and the buckler-up to pass the gun back and forth between them when the angle is difficult. Also on a heavy

rivet job the catcher and the bucker-up may relieve the gun-man at the gun.

The weight of the gups is one cause, though indirect, of accidents. The rivet set, which is the actual hammer at the point of the gun, is held in place, when the gun leaves the factory, by clips. Since the clips increase the weight of the hammer, it is good riveting practice to knock them off against the nearest column and replace them with a hank of wire. But wire has a way of breaking, and when it breaks there is nothing to keep the rivet set and the pneumatic piston itself from taking the bucker-up or the catcher on the belt and knocking him into the next block.

Riveters work ordinarily eight hours a day at a wage of \$15.40 a day. They are not employed in bad or slippery weather, and they are not usually on the regular pay roll of the erectors, but go from job to job following foremen whom they like. There is no great future for a riveter. A good gun-man may become an assistant foreman, a pusher, whose duty it is to keep the various gangs at work. But pushers are used for such work only on very large jobs.

It would perhaps be more accurate to say that a riveter's future is not bright at all. The rates charged for compensation insurance are generally accepted as the best barometer of risk. Starrett Brothers & Eken fix, in their insurance department, a rate of \$23.45 per \$100 of pay for erecting and painting steel frame structures. Rates of other companies run to \$30 per \$100 of pay. The only higher rate is for wrecking work. The next lower rate (\$15.08) is for building raising. Masonry is \$6.07 and carpentry \$4.39. Figures on industrial accidents published by the U. S. Department of Labor bear the same connotation. In one year the frequency of accidents, per 1,000,000 hours' exposure, was 228.9 for fabricators and erectors as against 54 for general building.

There was an adage at one time current to the effect that it cost a life to a floor to build a skyscraper. The computation may have originated with a famous downtown building of fifteen years ago in which, with the steel at the fifth floor five deaths had already occurred. (The Travelers Insurance Company, called in to take over the insurance in that case, made a study of the conditions of the job, recommended certain changes, enforced its own supervision, and saw the remaining thirty-two stories built with but one more fatality.) Or the saying may have arisen and may have been true in the days of ten-story skyscrapers. But to apply it, like the architect's 6 per cent fee, to seventy-story buildings would be pure extravagance. Nevertheless a bloodless building is still a marvel.

Five Hundred Fifth Avenue, which has had no deaths to date, is used as an object lesson for builders by the insurance companies, and the Chrysler Building, which was built with the loss of one life, was awarded a certificate of merit by the Building Trades Employers' Association. Four men were killed on The Manhattan Company job, and five were reported to have been killed on the Empire State by the middle of July. In general, deaths run from three to eight on sizable buildings. These figures, in the opinion of the Travelers company, are excessive. The Travelers would allow a builder two at the most.

Such accidents are of course expensive, but injuries short of death are more costly. Liability of \$875,000 for deaths was incurred in the building trades in the New York district in the last six months of 1928, and \$3,145,586 for deaths and injuries. The total of both for the same period in 1929 was \$3,885,881.

The safety campaign in the construction industry is blocked by various causes of which the novelty of skyscraper construction and the prevalence of shoestring construction projects are two of the most obvious. More important than either, however, is the attitude of construction workmen. Their trade inures them to danger and they are, as a class, as willing to take risks for others as for themselves. A riveter who has seen three or four hundred red hot rivets a day kept off the heads of the members of the Stock Exchange by an old tin can gets used to the idea. In a recent accident case a man had been injured in the street by the fall of a hammer in use on a building half a block away. No possible wind velocity would account for the drift. The only explanation was that the hammer had been thrown from one man to another. And had missed.

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# The Future of the Great City

STUART CHASE

## I

A distinguished savant has perfected a mechanical contrivance which measures the intensity of noise. To my knowledge nobody has yet invented a device to register quantitatively likes and dislikes. During most of one's Conscious hours spent in a great city—or anywhere else for that matter—one is so intent upon his job, his food, his sweetheart, or his transit connections that no reactions, in the sense of liking or disliking the impending environment, are registered at all. Here it is, world without end: nothing can be done about it; why bother to appraise it?

Suppose, however, we begin this inquiry into the future of the great city by halting for a moment the remorseless pursuit of the next sixty minutes and deliberately allowing both the pleasurable and painful sensations of city living to filter through to consciousness.

Fifteen years ago I enjoyed residing in Boston—pleasure slightly outweighed pain. Ten years ago I enjoyed living in Washington, with a higher pleasure margin. In the interim I took up residence in Chicago and suffered a large debit balance. This was not due to human intercourse but only to the physical impact of the town. The people of Chicago are the pleasantest I have ever met. For the past decade I have lived in New York, with an adverse reaction only less than that experienced in the headquarters of the racketeers.

Coming into Manhattan, I begin to feel a strange uneasiness like a slight attack of seasickness; leaving it, I suddenly grow more cheerful. Why? I am no confirmed bucolic; no city-hater in cheese-cloth and sandals. The thoughts which men generate in cities are as important to me as bread. For the past few weeks I have been noting specific impressions in an attempt to come to closer terms with this mysterious total feeling. The record is voluminous, running to hundreds of cases. Here is space for only a few of the more typical, together with certain generalizations into which many of the cases fall. You realize, of course, that we are here dealing more with the testimony of the five senses than with economics, or philosophy, or divination. You realize, too, that lacking a machine

like that of Dr. Free, the intensity of the reaction cannot be given, only the bare fact.

*Positive Reactions*—pleasurable

The city from the East River at sunset

Brooklyn Bridge

Cube masses against blue sky

Corrugated ridges of step-backs—say at 34th Street

Fifth Avenue below 14th Street—where fine old houses and a Ghost of dignity remain

The interior of the Graybar Building—many of the newer building interiors

Inside block gardens—say Mark Van Doren's

The view of the city from a high roof garden, particularly at night; towers indirectly illuminated

Bars of sunlight under the elevated railroad

The interior of the Grand Central Station

The Bronx River Parkway

Girls on Fifth Avenue above 42nd Street (one out of six is lovely)

Building excavations with a nuzzling steam shovel

The inside of power houses

Morningside Heights and Riverside Drive, looking across to the Palisades

The American Wing in the Metropolitan Museum

The new Hudson River Bridge

Here and there a shop window with extraordinary modern decorations

The oaths of taxicab drivers

A Stadium concert on a summer night

*Negative Reactions*—painful

Jammed traffic

Fire-engine sirens, motor-car horns, the cacophony of riveting, loud speakers, steamboat whistles (at night), most people's voices, the rasp of elevator doors, the roar of traffic in general, and that of the elevated in particular

All trucks (probably because I saw a woman killed by one on Seventh Avenue)

The insignificance of the sun and moon

A feeling akin to being at the bottom of a well

Central Park (it reminds me of a warmed-over meal)

The lower East Side with its dreadful old-law tenements

Park Avenue and its apartment houses like so many packing cases

The expression on the faces of most people

The smell of incompletely burned gasoline, of barber-shops, of Grand Street, of the garbage mountain with the locomotives on the top of it in Queens, of Chinatown, of the subway, of soda fountains

Movie palaces—with one or two exceptions  
 Delicatessen stores  
 Signboards and car signs  
 All travel by subway, tunnel or street car  
 The noon-hour crowd in front of establishments manufacturing  
 garments  
 Suburbs—with a few exceptions  
 The outside of power houses  
 The gentlemen with no immediate purpose in life around Times  
 Square  
 The ripping open of streets—like a public operation  
 Filling stations  
 Trees—probably because I love trees  
 Dust, dirt, and cinders  
 Most restaurants, particularly cafeterias (In Paris the reaction is  
 mainly pleasurable. Why the difference?)  
 The huddle of skyscrapers around the Grand Central—the big bullies  
 City refuse on Long Beach—even on Fire Island, forty miles away

These lists give, I fear, a shattering insight into the shortcomings  
 of the compiler's character, but they are at least honest. There is  
 not a "wisecrack" in either category. These are the sorts of things  
 which alternately elevate and depress that unique system of electrons  
 which comprises my earthly temple. You, gentle reader, will disagree  
 in detail, but will you disagree in general? Our electronic systems  
 may diverge but all follow a basic pattern known as *homo sapiens*.  
 What the lists say, in essence, is this:

There are more painful than pleasurable sensations in one's  
 contact with a huge American city of the present day.

Pleasure is found in sudden glimpses, in certain lights on archi-  
 tectural masses, in occasional arresting and amusing adventures,  
 in the arts which the great city has to display.

Pain is found in noise, dust, smell, crowding, the pressure of the  
 clock, in negotiating traffic, in great stretches of bleak and dour  
 ugliness, in looking always up instead of out, in a continually  
 battering sense of human inferiority.

These mile-high walls are everything, man is nothing. In Boston  
 and Washington the walls were negotiable; one could respect one-  
 self. That was years ago. Now the traffic roars on Boylston Street  
 and Pennsylvania Avenue as it does at Herald Square. Internal-  
 combustion engines are not so dwarfing as mile-high walls but  
 in such boiling steel masses they overawe the pedestrian, force him  
 below the plane of human dignity. Why should we scamper like  
 rats rather than walk like men?

Megalopolis is not a pleasant home for many of its citizens, awake or asleep. Even for those—and they may be the majority—whose pleasure quotient exceeds the pain, the gross volume of the latter, however unconscious, does much to retard a gracious and civilized life. Look at the faces in the street. The machine has gathered us up and dumped us by the millions into these roaring canyons. Year by year more millions are harvested, the canyon shadows deepen, the roar grows louder. No man, no group of men, knows where this conglomeration of steel and glass and stone, with the most highly complicated nervous system ever heard of—a giant with a weak digestion—is headed. So, with an open field, I make bold to present three main alternatives.

First—Megalopolis can continue its present course of becoming increasingly congested, hectic, and biologically alien to an ordered human life; its vast transportation systems pumping us back and forth from “places where we would rather not live to places where we would rather not work”—until a saturation point is reached. This may take the form either of a sudden and disastrous technical breakdown or a less dramatic surfeit of citizens with their environment, resulting in steady emigration and an ultimate collapse of land values. In the case of New York, with its twenty billions on the assessors’ rolls, such a collapse would rock the financial structure of the nation. A mechanical breakdown is not as probable for horizontal cities, such as Washington; but Clarence Stein, the distinguished architect, regards it as very probable for vertical cities such as New York.

Second—By virtue of an aroused public opinion or of a benevolent dictatorship—of which there are few signs to date—it is conceivable that in the case of those cities which had not entangled and enmeshed themselves beyond all human aid, drastic measures of coördination and preplanning might be introduced, fundamental enough really to adapt Megalopolis to civilized existence. We have the technical knowledge to do it, machines are always ready to help as well as to hinder; we have the engineering ability, and even for some areas the specific blueprints. But nobody has yet found a practical way to reckon with the land speculator and his colossal pyramid of values, duly capitalized on congestion. As Mr. Lewis Mumford acutely points out, the trouble with American cities is not that they have not been planned, but that the plan—in the configuration of a gridiron—has had no other purpose than to provide the most advantageous method for selling and reselling

real estate. Cities have been laid out for profitable speculation, not for human use, and in the defense of that plan the most powerful forces in the Republic have fought, now fight, and will fight so long as they can stand and see. It is for this cogent reason that no fundamentally constructive program can be anything more than "impractical." In such a city as Washington, laid out a century ago with an eye to living rather than to rent collecting, the chances of introducing the necessary adjustments are, of course, somewhat brighter than in Chicago or Philadelphia or New York.

Third—Whether we save our cities by functional planning or continue somehow to exist in their ever grimmer canyons, there is always the possibility that on some fine morning a swarm of bombing planes will appear above the skyscraper tops, laugh heartily at the impotent clamor of anti-aircraft guns and, by means of a few judicious tons of radium atomite, poison gases, and, shall we say, typhus-fever cultures, dropped at strategic points, put an end to our hopes or to our miseries, as the case may be, and that quite finally. In the next war it is the great city which is to come in for the most intensive extermination. Upon this point all military experts of any intelligence seem singularly unanimous.

I shall not examine this last alternative in any detail. It deserves mention and is now mentioned. Perhaps there will be no more wars. Perhaps by virtue of the League of Nations and Mr. Kellogg and Messrs. Hoover and MacDonald arm in arm, the institution of war now stands officially liquidated. Your smile answers mine. And as you smile you accept unreservedly the probability of another major conflict. There is always the chance, of course, that it will not be your city which the enemy selects for scientific experimentation. But it will be some hefty member of *genus megalopolis*, and probably more than one.

Turning now to the more immediate enemy within. What are the chances of technical breakdown? Is a saturation point approaching? What is the evidence, beyond the likes and dislikes of one insignificant citizen, that Megalopolis provides physically and spiritually an alien home? First let us sketch briefly its nervous system.

Below its streets you will normally find:

1. Water mains—from six inches to six feet in diameter. If the latter burst, they "cause more havoc than dynamite"
2. Gas mains—spreading wholesale death if punctured
3. Steam mains—carrying heat from central plants to office buildings, and also temperamental

4. Sewers—some of them big enough to drive a truck through, and not particular where they end
5. Subways—140 miles of them in New York. In some places there are four tubes one below the other. They carry the equivalent of the total population of the United States every two weeks. The whole system is now being doubled at the cost of \$700,000,000. It will only make congestion worse. Blasting must be carried on close to four-foot water mains, while many men die from silica dust. (“Fifty-seven per cent of all rock drillers, blasters, and excavators examined were suffering from a probably fatal pulmonary disease resulting from the inhalation of rock dust”)
6. Electric light and power cables
7. Telephone cables—up to 2400 wires on a single cable
8. Telegraph cables
9. Pneumatic mail tubes
10. Sidewalk vaults—always good hosts to sewer gas, as we shall see

Here are ten subterranean nerves—that is, theoretically subterranean. As a matter of fact, it is a dull day on any block when gentlemen in goggles and dun-colored overalls, armed with prodigious flares and ripping mechanisms, are not hauling one or another of the arteries towards the surface, to pound and batter them unmercifully. In a hundred yards of street, I counted eleven separate assaults in a week. Four of them cost me a good many hours’ sleep. But Dante would have enjoyed the midnight spectacle.

On and above the surface is another great series of nerves, equally important if less mysterious. It comprises:

1. Bridges and causeways which admit traffic, particularly foodstuffs, to the city
2. Trolley lines
3. Elevated railways
4. Railroad terminals and switch yards
5. Milk and ice supply, the truck delivery service generally
6. Traffic control
7. Fire-fighting apparatus
8. Ambulance, hospital, and burial services
9. Garbage and waste collection—an obstreperous nerve
10. Street cleaning and snow disposal
11. Building and safety inspection
12. Elevator service—without which hardly more than ten per cent of normal business could be carried on
13. Radio wave-length control. And soon
14. The maintenance of landing fields, and the control of transportation by air

There is hardly an item in either the subterranean or the surface systems which is not cardinal to the continued functioning of Megalopolis. If one prime nerve is cut for any length of time, the urban environment starts rapidly to disintegrate, leaving the way-faring man—who has not the faintest notion of the technic which provisions him—as helpless as an airplane in a tail spin. For him the water supply runs no farther back than the faucet; the food supply than the delicatessen store. Furthermore, so interlocked is the whole structure that the failing of one nerve is almost sure to result in the rupture of others.

That these arteries are not functioning altogether smoothly some recent occurrences demonstrate. Last December a mile of London streets was suddenly ripped open by gas explosions—"thrown into the air like confetti." Many citizens were hurt, while the surrounding population was frightened as it had not been since the Zeppelin raids. The property damage was immense. The Surveyors Institution proceeded to investigate this and other mysterious gas explosions and has recently handed down its report. It finds that automobiles and trucks are now putting a strain on road surfaces and the terrain thereunder which they were never designed to meet. Pipes, conduits, and mains continually increase their diameters; the load from above grows heavier, and the vitally essential cushion of earth between the two grows scantier. Steel, like flesh and blood, is subject to fatigue. Iron and steel mains suffer an accelerating deterioration due to vibration and the sudden temperature changes which the scantier earth promotes. Proper inspection is utterly impossible under modern traffic conditions. Meanwhile the steady removal of trees and the open spaces of loose earth about them takes away the natural outlets through which gases may harmlessly escape. Increasingly, gases are compressed beneath a solid roof of stone, brick, and asphalt. "The closing of these outlets," says the Institution, "results in either the accumulation of gaseous mixtures in abandoned sewers and subsoil cavities, or gas may penetrate laterally into adjoining vaults and basements. Actual ignition may occur through the use of a naked light or from a spark produced by the short circuiting of an electric fitting." As the vault and its inhabitants take their skyward way, it is often difficult to determine which method of ignition furnished the inciting cause.

A great surgeon has given his life to mitigating human suffering. He established a clinic in the city of Cleveland. Suddenly he found himself working desperately to save the lives not only of his pa-

tients but of his colleagues and hospital staff. For forty-eight uninterrupted hours he labored, but at the end more than a hundred persons were dead. An unknown gas had exploded in the X-ray film room, to kill every human being whose lungs it touched. Thus a place of healing had turned into a shambles—no man quite knowing why.

A few weeks later a coroner's jury of pathologists and chemists in Chicago were trying to determine how methyl chloride was liberated in artificial ice machines and why it had just killed fifteen people.

Among those who testified at the inquest was Dr. Robert Jacobson. He told the jury that he had attended the family of Mr. and Mrs. Irving Markowski of 4856 Milwaukee Avenue, when three young children became ill and died mysteriously. The physician said the same slight odor that was present in the Clark apartment was also in the Markowski home and that he had become convinced that all had died of methyl chloride. . . . Several representatives of the ice machine company also testified, and said that 1500 of their refrigerators were in use in Chicago.

Not long ago the Muggerberg Company of Hamburg, Germany, allowed phosgene gas to escape through its stacks at night. It formed a blanket over the city and, before it could be dissipated, eleven persons had been suffocated to death.

On one page of one newspaper we read the headlines:

Sixteen Killed and Seven Injured in Factory Blast.

One Burned to Death, Twenty-five Overcome in Gas Explosion.  
Man Rescues Four in Ammonia Blast.

In New York, the ninth car of a subway express jumped the track at Times Square, crashed through a concrete wall and was cut in two. All safety devices were working, but the switchman's normal reflexes were momentarily in abeyance. This "man failure" cost 17 killed and 101 wounded. The situation in the tunnel at the rush hour was indescribable. Can we expect ever to eliminate man failure in the gigantic pressure of the rush hour? Cars with seats for 44, straps for 56, a total of 100, now carry 252 persons at the morning and evening peaks. The close-up as the last sardines are kicked and battered into their cans, strong-armed guards assisting, is likewise indescribable. Indeed, subways have been shrewdly designated by Mr. E. K. Lindley as "feedpipes for skyscrapers," constituting the perfect vicious circle. The higher the skyscrapers, the more subways are dug to fill them. The greater the subway ca-

capacity, the more skyscrapers are reared to absorb it. Thus the new Eighth Avenue line in New York produces automatically a new one hundred and ten story building on Eighth Avenue.

A short circuit in a power house at Fiftieth Street started a tiny fire, but a smoky one. Almost instantly all power left the Grand Central Station. Throughout the night no train could move in or out. In the tunnels powerful electric engines came helplessly to rest, and the frightened passengers climbed ladders through manholes to the street. The great haughty continental expresses stopped at the city limits. Suburbanites milled and jostled in the terminal, ultimately to decide that it was a long walk home, and to begin searching for a bed.

Two thousand truck drivers recently threatened to strike in one great city. Immediately the entire perishable food supply was imperiled. If they could have held their ranks, a mortgage on the City Hall would not have been too great a price to buy them off. Nor would two thousand have been necessary. An engineer once explained to me how one hundred key technicians in power houses, flood-gate stations, and signal towers could bring the entire life of Megalopolis to an abrupt conclusion. A tiny piece of carelessness in a Springfield generating station shut off all light and power from the city for many hours. Business was brought to a standstill, traffic ceased, one factory alone lost 3,500 man hours.

An epidemic may secure a start in an hour's time from an unnoticed flow of polluted water into the municipal supply. It is physically impossible for chemists to analyze water continuously in order to determine how much chlorine is needed to purify it. And here at last is a ray of sunshine. A Swiss has invented an "automatic chemist," which keeps the chlorinating process on duty twenty-four hours in the day. It was exhibited recently but has yet to be adopted and installed by any American city. It induces speculation as to how many other vital services are in need of similar automatic controls.

### III

So much for the factor of technological tenuousness. The nerves of Megalopolis are jumpy, and under the going custom of hit-and-miss nobody makes it his business to find out how jumpy, or to plan any rational system for lessening the pressure. The drift is toward an even worse confusion, and so, inevitably, toward the possibility of an ever more serious technical collapse.

Let us turn now to human nerves. The wayfaring man remains

sublimely unaware of a chlorine deficiency in his water until an epidemic overwhelms him, but motor cars and their collateral smells and noises pursue him every moment of the day and night. In the first eight months of 1929, 821 persons were killed by automobiles in the streets of New York, against 666 during a similar period in 1928. Deaths in all American cities from this cause have increased nine per cent in the current year. In less than two years motor cars have killed as many people in the United States as there were American soldiers killed in the War and wounded seven times as many as there were soldiers wounded. One in three of the fatalities is a child under fifteen. City-driving speeds have doubled in twenty years.

As I go about American cities, and particularly as I drive about them in taxicabs, I notice how the margin of safety continually declines. Where I allow, let us say, a five-foot tolerance when driving myself, the taxicab chauffeur will cut it to two feet, one foot, aye, to nothing at all. Indeed, I have been forced to give up back-seat driving altogether. I cannot bear to forecast the probabilities of such narrow margins. At the present time motor traffic is operating on inches where it used to operate on yards. Probably the only thing which saves us from ten times the death toll is that when we are not cutting corners on one wheel, we are hopelessly stalled in a frozen traffic jam. Recently, on foot in New York, I started with a bus at Washington Square, and proceeded north along Fifth Avenue. At Fifty-ninth Street I halted and, taking out my watch, counted out fifteen minutes before that particular bus appeared. The trouble is that the nervous strain of waiting makes for an embittered recklessness when the lanes are opened up—and no better evidence of that strain can be found than in the insane tooting of every horn in the whole congealed mass. The Queensboro Bridge has been christened by a New York editor, *The Bridge of Nervous Breakdowns*. "Given a reasonable expectancy of life, steady nerves, infinite patience, and a Christian resignation to fate, a man will no doubt get from one end of it to the other. But how many of us can boast these qualities at 6 P.M.?" He calls for double-decking—which, when the news is abroad, would, one fears, simply mean doubling the nervous breakdowns.

The evening of Labor Day, 1929, was unbearably hot and sultry. It was—according to the sublime processes of the New York holiday custom—the evening selected by some three million people to return to town. Two million had spent the day at Coney Island (and there is one of Megalopolis' most incredible sights: lucky the

man who can fight his way into the water on such a day) or at Long Beach or Rockaway Beach or Atlantic City; the other million comprised the returning vacationists. Twenty-two persons were killed on the streets. Eighteen sections of extra trains arrived simultaneously at the Grand Central Station. The subways were choked beyond all endurance; trains ran ninety minutes late; buses, five hours late; the jam of the Holland Tunnel under the Hudson River was so prodigious that incoming motorists left their cars in every New Jersey gutter and fought for standing room on the ferries or in the tubes. Bumper to bumper, the steel files ran thirty, forty miles into the country over the Albany Post Road, the Boston Post Road, the Merrick Road, the Jericho Turnpike; with bed long after sun-up for those at the remoter ends of the file. Thus Megalopolis enjoys its holiday.

*Citizen A:* "Are you going to the country for the week-end?"

*Citizen B:* "How could I get back?"

It would be a great mistake to suppose that such conditions are found only in New York. Manhattan is a sublime exhibit, but one to which every other American city aspires with the utmost enthusiasm. Look at the skyscrapers shooting out of the Texas plain—congestion deliberately created amid unending square miles of open space. I sometimes wonder if the erection of lofty buildings does not often transcend the economic basis altogether. How many are built for the sheer satisfaction of registering the highest altitude yet reached; how many to expand the ego of the promoter?

British scientists predict the coming of the deaf age owing to metropolitan noises and, justly enough, select New Yorkers as the first who are to lose their hearing. Herald Square, according to Doctor Free's instrument, is fifty-five sensation units above quiet. To talk to a person in front of Macy's one must shout as loudly as to a person more than half deaf. Ordinary street noises produce a result comparable to that of one-third deafness, with certain locations doubling this rate. A badly serviced truck will make five times as much clamor as one of the same make in good repair. But where is space for the repair shops? Typists require nineteen per cent more energy to work in a noisy room than in a quiet one. Twenty per cent of all office workers' energy is wasted combating sound. The Wright Whirlwind motor and the New York subway both register seventy-five units on Doctor Free's machine, five units higher than a riveting machine in full cry.

The Health Commissioner of New York tells us that people are taking to drugs and sedatives to make them sleep. In the labora-

tories of Colgate University white rats, continuously exposed to normal city sounds, grow less, eat less, are less active and playful than their brothers exposed only to quiet. School children, it has been found, are very seriously handicapped in their work by street noises. To make matters worse, it has been determined that short skirts increase the racket. Legs bounce the sounds back, where millions of yards of textiles on city streets used to absorb a measurable fraction! Professor Spooner of Oxford, overwhelmed by such facts, calls despairingly upon the League of Nations to attack the problem. "Never," he says, "has civilization been confronted with such a malignant plague."

Not to be outdone by Doctor Free, Mr. Howard C. Murphy, a heating and ventilating engineer, has invented a machine for measuring dust, and so deluged us with another shower of gloomy statistics. The dirtiest city in America is St. Louis, fighting its way through 17,600 dust particles per cubic foot—with Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Detroit, in that order, following close behind. New York for once loses its crown, having only 9,700 particles per cubic foot; but this is about four times as much as in country air. Winter death rates in cities have now passed summer death rates "due to one outstanding factor—smoke, dust and contaminated air." Meanwhile, though the sun may occasionally shine, all health-giving ultra-violet rays are completely excluded by the dome of dust and smoke which forever hangs above the skyscraper tops.

In brief, Megalopolis, for all its gaudy show, its towering architecture, its many refinements and cloistered comforts, is not physically fit for ordinary people to live in. And as the noise, dust, accident, explosion, and traffic congestion figures show, it grows continually worse. The technological limits of the machine have been repeatedly outraged until now the tangle of vital nerves is so complicated and involved that it is safe to say no one understands them or realizes in the faintest measure the probability and extent of some major lesion.

This, the first of the three alternatives submitted earlier, is my favorite for the future of great cities. They will drift blindly into breakdown. The final collapse may be very sudden and very terrible, due, let us say, to unendurable pressures of underground gases. Or, and more probably, Megalopolis will become so alien to normal living that even Jews, with two thousand years of urban adaptation in their inheritance, will leave it. Nor will the irate citizen return until guaranteed space in which to breathe, move, and function adequately. This will demolish the whole structure of

land values, and in the end demand the complete rearrangement of metropolitan anatomy.

#### IV

Can we reverse the process, and rearrange before the breakdown? Logically we can, psychologically we probably shall not. No one in his senses would advocate that Megalopolis should abandon its mechanical arteries, and go back to the London of Doctor Johnson. But it is difficult to see why anyone in his senses should not demand that technological tenuousness be adequately appraised and squarely met. If we are to live in mechanical cities—and that is the path we have chosen—we ought to respect the mechanism. If the structure of real estate values—the subway-skyscraper complex, for instance—insists on choking the mechanism, then we ought either to abolish the structure and run the city on sound engineering principles or abolish the city as a complicated mechanical phenomenon altogether. Nor can the choice be indefinitely delayed.

If we want a city to use and enjoy we must give up great sections of the real estate racket. It must be planned for function, its nervous channels protected with space, open areas, "balanced loads," adequate and incessant supervisions. Dynamite as a clearing agent must be freely employed, a whole new orientation of work areas, play areas, home areas, established. If the landlord refuses to budge, then dynamite the landlord—by vigorous condemnation proceedings if you prefer. Technically the thing is complicated, but certainly negotiable. One can nominate a dozen engineers and architects who, given a free hand, could make even New York genuinely habitable and reasonably safe within a decade—and at a cost not so much greater than that of the new subway program. Dynamite is relatively cheap.

But the job would have to be done with the same high-handedness and vigor which characterized the War Industries Board when, overriding a thousand encrusted traditions and petty rights, it put the nation on a war footing. A perfectly ruthless civic will must operate. Tear down a square mile here, a square mile there. Obliterate this reeking slum. Double the width of this street; abandon and build on that one. Construct great causeways to by-pass through traffic. A year in Sing Sing for any loud speaker audible after ten o'clock. No private motor cars at certain hours below Fifty-ninth Street, New York, and only 15,000 taxicabs. Two years in Atlanta for an unserviced truck making five times the noise it should. Fifty thousand trees to be set out immediately. Sidewalk cafés to be

widely encouraged. Half of all subways to be permanently sealed, with a two-day festival and free beer. Three years in the Andaman Islands for a reeking chimney. Garbage to be completely carbonized and by-producted. Four years on Nova Zembla for polluting river or harbor waters with oil refuse. Forty per cent of all industry to move outside the city limits to designated areas. (Suburbanites can thus commute *outward* as well as inward to their work.) The death penalty for all the officers and employees of companies caught broadcasting advertising matter from airplanes (as recently recommended by a hospital doctor in a letter to the *World*). And so on.

You are smiling again. But I am not. When I think of the city fit for the high gods to live in which modern engineering might build . . . when I think of what Megalopolis might be . . .

*The Nemesis of American Business, 1933*

# The South



Rockwell Kent Illustration, courtesy of R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company



# Southern Scenes

## 1. The Cotton Boll

HENRY TIMROD

While I recline  
At ease beneath  
This immemorial pine,  
Small sphere!  
(By dusky fingers brought this morning here  
And shown with boastful smiles),  
I turn thy cloven sheath,  
Through which the soft white fibres peer,  
That, with their gossamer bands,  
Unite, like love, the sea-divided lands,  
And slowly, thread by thread,  
Draw forth the folded strands,  
Than which the trembling line,  
By whose frail help yon startled spider fled  
Down the tall spear-grass from his swinging bed,  
Is scarce more fine;  
And as the tangled skein  
Unravels in my hands,  
Betwixt me and the noonday light,  
A veil seems lifted, and for miles and miles  
The landscape broadens on my sight,  
As, in the little boll, there lurked a spell  
Like that which, in the ocean shell,  
With mystic sound,  
Breaks down the narrow walls that hem us round,  
And turns some city lane  
Into the restless main,  
With all his capes and isles!

Yonder bird,  
Which floats, as if at rest,  
In those blue tracts above the thunder, where  
No vapors cloud the stainless air,  
And never sound is heard,

Unless at such rare time  
When, from the City of the Blest,  
Rings down some golden chime,  
Sees not from his high place  
So vast a cirque of summer space  
As widens round me in one mighty field,  
Which, rimmed by seas and sands,  
Doth hail its earliest daylight in the beams  
Of gray Atlantic dawns;  
And, broad as realms made up of many lands,  
Is lost afar  
Behind the crimson hills and purple lawns  
Of sunset, among plains which roll their streams  
Against the Evening Star!  
And lo!  
To the remotest point of sight,  
Although I gaze upon no waste of snow,  
The endless field is white;  
And the whole landscape glows,  
For many a shining league away,  
With such accumulated light  
As Polar lands would flash beneath a tropic day! . . .

*Poems, 1873*

## 2. The Edge of the Swamp

WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS

'Tis a wild spot, and even in summer hours,  
With wondrous wealth of beauty and a charm  
For the sad fancy, hath the gloomiest look,  
That awes with strange repulsion. There, the bird  
Sings never merrily in the sombre trees,  
That seem to have never known a term of youth,  
Their young leaves all being blighted. A rank growth  
Spreads venomously round, with power to taint;  
And blistering dews await the thoughtless hand  
That rudely parts the thicket. Cypressess,  
Each a great ghastly giant, eld and gray,  
Stride o'er the dusk, dank tract,—with buttresses

Spread round, apart, not seeming to sustain,  
Yet link'd by secret twines, that, underneath,  
Blend with each arching trunk. Fantastic vines,  
That swing like monstrous serpents in the sun,  
Bind top to top, until the encircling trees  
Group all in close embrace. Vast skeletons  
Of forests, that have perish'd ages gone,  
Moulder, in mighty masses, on the plain;  
Now buried in some dark and mystic tarn,  
Or sprawl'd above it, resting on great arms,  
And making, for the opossum and the fox,  
Bridges, that help them as they roam by night.  
Alternate stream and lake, between the banks,  
Glimmer in doubtful light: smooth, silent, dark,  
They tell not what they harbor; but, beware!  
Lest, rising to the tree on which you stand,  
You sudden see the moccasin snake heave up  
His yellow shining belly and flat head  
Of burnish'd copper. Stretch'd at length, behold  
Where yonder Cayman, in his natural home,  
The mammoth lizard, all his armor on,  
Slumbers half-buried in the sedgy grass,  
Beside the green ooze where he shelters him.  
The place, so like the gloomiest realm of death,  
Is yet the abode of thousand forms of life,—  
The terrible, the beautiful, the strange,—  
Wingèd and creeping creatures, such as make  
The instinctive flesh with apprehension crawl,  
When sudden we behold. Hark! at our voice  
The whooping crane, gaunt fisher in these realms,  
Erects his skeleton form and shrieks in flight,  
On great white wings. A pair of summer ducks,  
Most princely in their plumage, as they hear  
His cry, with senses quickening all to fear,  
Dash up from the lagoon with marvellous haste,  
Following his guidance. See! aroused by these,  
And startled by our progress o'er the stream,  
The steel-jaw'd Cayman, from his grassy slope,  
Slides silent to the slimy green abode,  
Which is his province. You behold him now,  
His bristling back uprising as he speeds  
To safety, in the center of the lake,

Whence his head peers alone,—a shapeless knot,  
That shows no sign of life; the hooded eye,  
Nathless, being ever vigilant and sharp,  
Measuring the victim. See! a butterfly . . .  
Lights on the monster's brow. The surly mute  
Straightway goes down; so suddenly that he,  
The dandy of the summer flowers and woods,  
Dips his light wings, and soils his golden coat,  
With the rank waters of the turbid lake.  
Wondering and vex'd, the plumèd citizen  
Flies with an eager terror to the banks,  
Seeking more genial natures,—but in vain.  
Here are no gardens such as he desires,  
No innocent flowers of beauty, no delights  
Of sweetness free from taint. The genial growth  
He loves, finds here no harbor. Fetid shrubs,  
That scent the gloomy atmosphere, offend  
His pure patrician fancies. On the trees,  
That look like felon spectres, he beholds  
No blossoming beauties; and for smiling heavens,  
That flutter his wings with breezes of pure balm,  
He nothing sees but sadness—aspects dread,  
That gather frowning, cloud and fiend in one,  
As if in combat, fiercely to defend  
Their empire from the intrusive wing and beam.  
The example of the butterfly be ours.  
He spreads his lacquer'd wings above the trees,  
And speeds with free flight, warning us to seek  
For a more genial home, and couch more sweet  
Than these drear borders offer us to-night.

*Poems, 1853*

### 3. Charleston in the Seventies

EDWARD KING

The approaches to Charleston from the sea are unique, and the stranger yields readily to the illusion that the city springs directly from the bosom of the waves. The bar at the harbor's mouth will allow ships drawing seventeen feet of water to pass over it. The

entrance from the sea is commanded on either side by Morris and Sullivan's Islands, the former the scene of terrific slaughter during the dreadful days of 1863, and subsequently one of the points from which the Union forces bombarded Charleston; and the latter at present a fashionable summer resort, crowded with fine mansions. On the harbor side of Sullivan's Island, Fort Moultrie, a solid and well-constructed fortification, frowns over the hurrying waters. Passing Sumter, which lies isolated and in semi-ruin, looking, at a distance, like some coral island pushed up from the depths, one sails by pleasant shores lined with palmettoes and grand moss-hung oaks, and by Castle Pinckney, and anchors at the substantial wharves of the proud little city.

Many ships from many climes are anchored at these wharves, and the town seems the seaport of some thriving commercial state, so little does it represent the actual condition of South Carolina. The graceful Corinthian portico and columns of the new Custom-House, built of pure white marble, rise up near the water-side. There is a jolly refrain of the clinking of hammers, the rattling of drays, and the clanking of chains, which indicates much activity. Here some foreign vessel, which has come for phosphates, is unloading her ballast; here a rice-schooner is unloading near a pounding-mill. On one hand are lumberyards; on another, cottonsheds, filled with bales. Hundreds of negroes, screaming and pounding their mules, clatter along the piers and roadways; a great Florida steamer is swinging round, and starting on her ocean trip to the Peninsula, with her decks crowded with Northern visitors. Along "East Bay" the houses are, in many places, solid and antique. The whole aspect of the harbor quarter is unlike that of any of our new and smartly painted Northern towns. In Charleston the houses and streets have an air of dignified repose and solidity. At the foot of Broad street, a spacious avenue lined with banks and offices of professional men, stands the old Post-office, a building of the colonial type, much injured during the late war, but since renovated at considerable expense. Most of the original material for the construction of the edifice was brought from England in 1761. Within its walls the voices of Rutledge, Pinckney, Gadsden, Lowndes and Laurens were raised to vehemently denounce the Government against whose tyranny the thirteen original states rebelled; from the old steps Washington addressed the Charlestonians in 1791; and for many years during this century it was an Exchange for the merchants of Charleston and vicinity. When the British occupied Charleston, the building was the scene of many exciting

episodes. The basement was taken for a prison, and all who were devoted to the cause of American liberty were confined therein. From that prison the martyr, Isaac Hayne, was led to execution; and in the cellar one hundred thousand pounds of powder lay safely hidden from the British during the whole time of their occupation. On the site of this building stood the old council-chamber and watch-house used in the days of the proprietary government.

The original plan of Charleston comprised a great number of streets running at right angles, north and south, east and west, between the two rivers. But many of these streets were very narrow, being, in fact, nothing more than lanes; and they have remained unchanged until the present day. The darkness and narrowness of the old lanes, the elder colonists thought, would keep away the glare of the bright sun; but the modern Charlestonians do not seem of their opinion for they open wide avenues, and court the sun freely in their spacious and elegant mansions on the Battery. Some of the Charleston avenues present a novel appearance, bordered as they are on either side by tall, weather-stained mansions, whose gable-ends front upon the sidewalks, and which boast verandas attached to each story, screened from the sun and from observation by ample wooden lattices, and by trellised vines and creepers. The high walls, which one sees so often in France and England, surround the majority of the gardens, and it is only through the gate, as in New Orleans, that one can catch a glimpse of the loveliness within. In some of the streets remote from the harbor front, the stillness of death or desertion reigns; many of the better class of mansions are vacant, and here and there the residence of some former aristocrat is now serving as an abode for a dozen negro families.

On King Street one sees the most activity in the lighter branches of trade; there the ladies indulge in shopping, evening, morning, and afternoon; there is located the principal theatre, the tasty, little Academy of Music, and there also, are some elegant homes. Along that section of King street, near the crossing of Broad, however, are numerous little shops frequented by negroes, in which one sees the most extravagant array of gaudy but inexpensive articles of apparel; and of eatables which the negro palate cannot resist. The residence streets of the "Palmetto City," on the side next the Ashley river, are picturesque and lovely. They are usually bordered by many beautiful gardens. A labyrinth of long wooden piers and wharves runs out on the lagoons and inlets near the Ashley, and the boasted resemblance of Charleston to Venice is doubt-

less founded on the perfect illusion produced by a view of that section from a distance. The magnificent and the mean jostle each other very closely in all quarters.

*The Great South, 1875*

## 4. The Old Monteano Plantation

CONSTANCE FENIMORE WOOLSON

On the afternoon of the 23rd of December the thermometer marked eighty-six degrees in the shade. . . . [Deal], lying on the white sand, his head within the line of shadow cast by a live-oak, but all the remainder of his body full in the hot sunshine, basked like a chameleon, and enjoyed the heat. . . . He always took the live-oak for a head-protector; but gave himself variety by trying new radiations around the tree, his crossed legs and feet stretching from it in a slightly different direction each day, as the spokes of a wheel radiate from the hub. The live-oak was a symmetrical old tree, standing by itself; having always had sufficient space, its great arms were straight, stretching out evenly all around, densely covered with the small, dark, leathery leaves, unnotched and uncut, which are as unlike the Northern oak-leaf as the leaf of the willow is unlike that of the sycamore. Behind the live-oak two tall, ruined chimneys and a heap of white stones marked where the mansion-house had been. The old tree had watched its foundations laid; had shaded its blank, white front and little hanging balcony above; had witnessed its destruction, fifty years before, by the Indians; and had mounted guard over its remains ever since, alone as far as man was concerned. . . .

The ancient tree was Spanish to the core; it would have resented the sacrilege to the tips of its small acorns, if the newcomer had laid hands upon the dignified old ruin it guarded. The newcomer, however, entertained no such intention; a small outbuilding, roofless, but otherwise in good condition, on the opposite side of the circular space, attracted his attention, and became mentally his residence, as soon as his eyes fell upon it. . . . It was the old Monteano plantation, and he had taken it for a year.

The venerable little outbuilding was now firmly roofed with new, green boards; its square windows, destitute of sash or glass, possessed new wooden shutters hung by strips of deer's hide; new

steps led up to its two rooms, elevated four feet above the ground. But for a door it had only a red cotton curtain, now drawn forward and thrown carelessly over a peg on the outside wall, a spot of vivid color on its white. Underneath the windows hung flimsy strips of bark covered with brightly-hued flowers. . . .

As he basked, motionless, in the sunshine, it could be noted that this brother was a slender youth, with long, pale-yellow hair—hair fine, thin, and dry, the kind that crackles if the comb is passed rapidly through it. His face in sleep was pale and wizened, with deep purple shadows under the closed eyes; his long hands were stretched out on the white, hot sand in the blaze of the sunshine, which, however, could not alter their look of blue-white cold. The sunken chest and blanched temples told of illness; but if cure were possible, it would be gained from this soft, balmy, fragrant air, now soothing his sore lungs. He slept on in peace; and an old green chameleon came down from the tree, climbed up on the sleeve of his brown sack-coat, occupied himself for a moment in changing his own miniature hide to match the cloth, swelled out his scarlet throat, caught a fly or two, and then, pleasantly established, went to sleep also in company. Butterflies, in troops of twenty or thirty, danced in the golden air; there was no sound. Everything was hot and soft and brightly colored. Winter? Who knew of winter here? Labor? What was labor? This was the land and the sky and the air of never-ending rest.

*Rodman the Keeper, 1880*

## 5. Belles Demoiselles

GEORGE WASHINGTON CABLE

Coming up the Mississippi in the sailing craft of those early days, about the time one first could descry the white spires of the old St. Louis Cathedral you would be pretty sure to spy, just over to your right under the levee, Belles Demoiselles Mansion, with its broad veranda and red painted cypress roof, peering over the embankment, like a bird in the nest, half hid by the avenue of willows which one of the departed De Charleus,—he that married a Marot,—had planted on the levee's crown.

The house stood unusually near the river, facing eastward, and standing foursquare, with an immense veranda about its sides, and

a flight of steps in front spreading broadly downward, as we open arms to a child. From the veranda nine miles of river were seen; and in their compass, near at hand, the shady garden full of rare and beautiful flowers; farther away broad fields of cane and rice, and the distant quarters of the slaves, and on the horizon everywhere a dark belt of cypress forest.

The master was old Colonel De Charleu,—Jean Albert Henri Joseph De Charleu-Marot, and “Colonel” by the grace of the first American governor. Monsieur,—he would not speak to anyone who called him “Colonel,”—was a hoary-headed patriarch. His step was firm, his form erect, his intellect strong and clear, his countenance classic, serene, dignified, commanding, his manners courtly, his voice musical,—fascinating. He had had his vices,—all his life, but had borne them, as his race do, with a serenity of conscience and a cleanness of mouth that left no outward blemish on the surface of the gentleman. He had gambled in Royal street, drank hard in Orleans street, run his adversary through in the duelling-ground at Slaughter-house Point, and danced and quarreled at the St. Philippe-street-theatre quadron balls. Even now, with all his courtesy and bounty, and a hospitality which seemed to be entertaining angels, he was bitter-proud and penurious, and deep down in his hard-finished heart loved nothing but himself, his name, and his motherless children. But these!—their ravishing beauty was all but excuse enough for the unbounded idolatry of their father. Against these seven goddesses he never rebelled. . . .

To those, who, by, whatever fortune, wandered into the garden of Belles Demoiselles some summer afternoon as the sky was reddening towards evening, it was lovely to see the family gathered out upon the tiled pavement at the foot of the broad front steps, gaily chatting and jesting, with that ripple of laughter that comes so pleasantly from a bevy of girls. The father would be found seated in their midst, the center of attention, and compliment, witness, arbiter, umpire, critic, by his beautiful children’s unanimous appointment, but the single vassal, too, of seven absolute sovereigns.

Now they would draw their chairs near together in eager discussion of some new step in the dance, or the adjustment of some rich adornment. Now they would start about him with excited comments to see the eldest fix a bunch of violets in his button-hole. Now the twins would move down a walk after some unusual flower, and be greeted on their return with the high pitched notes of delighted feminine surprise.

As evening came on they would draw more quietly about their

paternal center. Often their chairs were forsaken, and they grouped themselves on the lower steps, one above another, and surrendered themselves to the tender influences of the approaching night. At such an hour the passer on the river, already attracted by the dark figures of the broad-roofed mansion, and its woody garden standing against the glowing sunset, would hear the voices of the hidden group rise from the spot clearer and clearer as the thrill of music warmed them into feeling, and presently joined by the deeper tones of the father's voice; then, as the daylight passed quite away, all would be still, and he would know that the beautiful home had gathered its nestlings under its wings.

*Old Creole Days*, 1879

## 6. Contemplation in New Orleans

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

He was in a city of small yellow brick and wooden dwellings, with flat balconies of ornamental iron, set among tropical flowers and trees. There were avenues of magnolias and wide-spreading live oaks, groves of myrtles and cedars; the gardens and public squares were luxurious with pomegranates and roses and jessamines, blooming cactus and banana palms; the houses were veiled in a waxen foliage of orange trees white-starred with blossoms. Gaut saw window-ledges sweet with rosemary, starlings busy in willow cages, and intimate courtyards green with moss. Slight pale girls in brief calico were selling violets and cinnamon pinks; older negro women had their heads tied in red or orange tignons. There was a constant soft crying in French. *Belles chandelles! Belles chandelles!*

A patrol went up the Levee, here broad and paved with pounded oyster shells; the gens d'armes wore blue frock-coats with gilt lace, and cocked hats; they carried swords and flintlocks. Indian women, standing in the doorways, cried gombo file and jambalaya and biere douce. The gombo file was wrapped in large plantain leaves, and the beer kept cool in tubs. There were Acadians smelling of cattle. Humble Spanish merchants, Catalans, with hand-carts. Tow-headed Germans. Choctaws naked but for bright casual rags. Greek ice-cream venders in fezes. Everything, it seemed to Gaut Penny, was for sale on the streets—red and white candies, pralines, ginger cakes, live fowls, and meats and vegetables, charms and clothes and jewelry. James Starin pressed forward.

“I might be better back yonder. Where I would be at home. This isn’t just the garden it looks like. Did you notice the canes on the Levee? Most of them are sword-canes. There is something about them you can tell. The nigger girls are too pretty and the air is too sweet to be comfortable. Just the same it’s a paradise. A paradise with a twist.”

*Quiet Cities*, 1928

## 7. Voudou Stronghold

FRANCES *and* EDWARD LAROCQUE TINKER

There was another lamp like the one he held, on a board in the back of the room, and through the smudged chimneys the yellow flames gleamed feebly on the weird, uncanny furnishings and sent long, slithering shadows across the white-washed walls. Bunches of dried herbs were nailed up everywhere, and hung from the ceiling were boxes of lizards and toads and small alligators, while several tame chickens walked about unconcernedly. Bottles of queer mixtures, some dark, some light, and some a vivid red, stood on the shelves and tables, and in the corner of the room on the littered floor, bundles of varied shapes were thrown in careless disorder.

A shallow basket stood on one side of the door, half full of white pebbles and small shells, and over them crawled dark brown crawfish and grotesque crabs, the flickering half-light giving them fantastic shapes of monstrous size. Dominating this Babel of objects with supreme serenity was a large black crucifix, and innumerable rosaries, like wavering stalactites, hung from every projection that could hold their weight. Some had dropped to the floor and lay curled up or tangled in the welter of an herb doctor’s pharmacopoeia.

*Widows Only*, 1931

## 8. Virginia Farms

ELLEN GLASGOW

A girl in an orange-coloured shawl stood at the window of Pedlar’s store and looked, through the falling snow, at the deserted

road. Though she watched there without moving, her attitude, in its stillness, gave an impression of arrested flight, as if she were running toward life.

Bare, starved, desolate, the country closed in about her. The last train of the day had gone by without stopping, and the station of Pedlar's Mill was as lonely as the abandoned fields by the track. From the bleak horizon, where the flatness created an illusion of immensity, the broomsedge was spreading in a smothered fire over the melancholy brown of the landscape. Under the falling snow, which melted as soon as it touched the earth, the colour was veiled and dim; but when the sky changed the broomsedge changed with it. On clear mornings the waste places were cinnamon-red in the sunshine. Beneath scudding clouds the plumes of the bent grasses faded to ivory. During the long spring rains, a film of yellow-green stole over the burned ground. At autumn sunsets, when the red light searched the country, the broomsedge caught fire from the afterglow and blazed out in a splendour of colour. Then the meeting of earth and sky dissolved in the flaming mist of the horizon.

At these quiet seasons, the dwellers near Pedlar's Mill felt scarcely more than a tremor on the surface of life. But on stormy days, when the wind plunged like a hawk from the swollen clouds, there was a quivering in the broomsedge, as if coveys of frightened partridges were flying from the pursuer. Then the quivering would become a ripple and the ripple would swell presently into rolling waves. The straw would darken as the gust swooped down, and brighten as it sped on to the shelter of scrub pine and sassafras bushes. And while the wind bewitched the solitude, a vague restlessness would stir in the hearts of living things on the farms, of men, women, and animals. "Broomsage ain't jest wild stuff. It's a kind of fate," old Matthew Fairlamb used to say.

Thirty years ago, modern methods of farming, even methods that were modern in the benighted eighteen-nineties, had not penetrated to this thinly settled part of Virginia. The soil, impoverished by the war and the tenant system which followed the war, was still drained of its lingering fertility for the sake of the poor crops it could yield. Spring after spring, the cultivated ground appeared to shrink into the "old fields," where scrub pine or oak succeeded broomsedge and sassafras as inevitably as autumn slipped into winter. Now and then a new start would be made. Some thrifty settler, a German Catholic, perhaps, who was trying his fortunes in a staunch Protestant community, would buy a mortgaged farm for a dollar an acre, and begin to experiment with suspicious,

strange-smelling fertilizers. For a season or two his patch of ground would respond to the unusual treatment and grow green with promise. Then the forlorn roads, deep in mud, and the surrounding air of failure, which was as inescapable as a drought, combined with the cutworm, the locust, and the tobacco-fly, against the human invader; and where the brief harvest had been, the perpetual broom-sedge would wave.

*Barren Ground, 1925*

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# Southern Anecdotes

## 1. A Change in the Judiciary

DAVID CROCKETT

I went first into Heckman county, to see what I could do among the people as a candidate. Here they told me that they wanted to move their town nearer to the centre of the county, and I must come out in favour of it. There's no devil if I knowed what this meant, or how the town was to be moved; and so I kept dark, going on the identical same plan that I now find is called "non-committal." About this time there was a great squirrel hunt on Duck river, which was among my people. They were to hunt two days: then to meet and count the scalps, and have a big barbecue, and what might be called a tip-top country frolic. The dinner, and a general treat, was all to be paid for by the party having taken the fewest scalps. I joined one side, taking the place of one of the hunters, and got a gun ready for the hunt. I killed a great many squirrels, and when we counted scalps, my party was victorious.

The company had every thing to eat and drink that could be furnished in so new a country, and much fun and good humour prevailed. But before the regular frolic commenced, I mean the dancing, I was called on to make a speech as a candidate; which was a business I was as ignorant of as an outlandish negro.

A public document I had never seen, nor did I know there were such things; and how to begin I couldn't tell. I made many apologies, and tried to get off, for I know'd I had a man to run against who could speak prime, and I know'd, too, that I wa'n't able to shuffle and cut with him. He was there, and knowing my ignorance as well as I did myself, he also urged me to make a speech. The truth is, he thought my being a candidate was a mere matter of sport; and didn't think, for a moment, that he was in any danger from an ignorant backwoods bear hunter. But I found I couldn't get off, and so I determined just to go ahead, and leave it to chance what I should say. I got up and told the people, I reckoned they know'd what I come for, but if not, I could tell them. I had come for their votes, and if they didn't watch mighty close, I'd get them too. But the worst of all was, that I couldn't

tell them any thing about government. I tried to speak about something, and I cared very little what, until I choaked up as bad as if my mouth had been jam'd and cram'd chock full of dry mush. There the people stood, listening all the while, with their eyes, mouths, and years all open, to catch every word I would speak.

At last I told them I was like a fellow I had heard of not long before. He was beating on the head of an empty barrel near the road-side, when a traveler, who was passing along, asked him what he was doing that for? The fellow replied, that there was some cider in that barrel a few days before, and he was trying to see if there was any then, but if there was he couldn't get at it. I told them that there had been a little bit of speech in me a while ago, but I believed I couldn't get it out. They all roared out in a mighty laugh, and I told some other anecdotes, equally amusing to them, and believing I had them in a first-rate way, I quit and got down, thanking the people for their attention. But I took care to remark that I was as dry as a powder horn, and that I thought it was time for us to wet our whistles a little; and so I put off to the liquor stand, and was followed by the greater part of the crowd.

I felt certain this was necessary, for I knowed my competitor could open government matters to them as easy as he pleased. He had, however, mighty few left to hear him, as I continued with the crowd, now and then taking a horn, and telling good humoured stories, till he was done speaking. I found I was good for the votes at the hunt, and when we broke up, I went on to the town of Vernon, which was the same they wanted to move. Here they pressed me again on the subject, and I found I could get either party by agreeing with them. But I told them I didn't know whether it would be right or not, and so couldn't promise either way.

Their court commenced on the next Monday, as the barbarcue was on a Saturday, and the candidates for governor and for Congress, as well as my competitor and myself, all attended.

The thought of having to make a speech made my knees feel mighty weak, and set my heart to fluttering almost as bad as my first love scrape with the Quaker's neice. But as good luck would have it, these big candidates spoke nearly all day, and when they quit, the people were worn out with fatigue, which afforded me a good apology for not discussing the government. But I listened mighty close to them, and was learning pretty fast about political

matters. When they were all done, I got up and told some laughable story, and quit. I found I was safe in those parts, and so I went home, and didn't go back again till after the election was over. But to cut this matter short, I was elected, doubling my competitor, and nine votes over.

A short time after this, I was in Pulaski, where I met with Colonel Polk, now a member of Congress from Tennessee. He was at that time a member elected to the Legislature, as well as myself; and in a large company he said to me, "Well, colonel. I suppose we shall have a radical change of the judiciary at the next session of the Legislature." "Very likely, sir," says I, and I put out quicker, for I was afraid some one would ask me what the judiciary was; and if I knowed I wish I may be shot. I don't indeed believe I had ever before heard that there was any such thing in all nature; but still I was not willing that the people there should know how ignorant I was about it.

When the time for meeting of the Legislature arrived, I went on, and before I had been there long, I could have told what the judiciary was, and what the government was too; and many other things that I had known nothing about before.

*Narrative of the Life of David Crockett, of the State of Tennessee, 1834*

## 2. Kentucky Shooting

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

Several individuals who conceive themselves expert in the management of the gun, are often seen to meet for the purpose of displaying their skill, and betting a trifling sum, put up a target, in the centre of which a common-sized nail is hammered for about two-thirds of its length. The marksmen make choice of what they consider a proper distance, which may be forty paces. Each man cleans the interior of his tube, which is called *wiping* it, places a ball in the palm of his hand, pouring as much powder from his horn upon it as will cover it. This quantity is supposed to be sufficient for any distance within a hundred yards. A shot which comes very close to the nail is considered as that of an indifferent marksman; the bending of the nail is, of course, somewhat better; but nothing less than hitting it right on the head is satisfactory. Well, kind reader, one out of three shots generally

hits the nail, and should the shooters amount to half a dozen, two nails are frequently needed before each can have a shot. Those who drive the nail have a further trial amongst themselves, and the two best shots of these generally settle the affair, when all the sportsmen adjourn to some house, and spend an hour or two in friendly intercourse, appointing, before they part, a day for another trial. This is technically termed *Driving the Nail*.

*Barking off squirrels* is delightful sport, and in my opinion requires a greater degree of accuracy than any other. I first witnessed this manner of procuring squirrels whilst near the town of Frankfort. The performer was the celebrated Daniel Boon. We walked out together, and followed the rocky margins of the Kentucky River, until we reached a piece of flat land thickly covered with black walnuts, oaks and hickories. As the general mast was a good one that year, squirrels were seen gambolling on every tree around us. My companion, a stout, hale, and athletic man, dressed in a homespun hunting-shirt, bare-legged and moccasined, carried a long and heavy rifle, which, as he was loading it, he said had proved efficient in all his former undertakings, and which he hoped would not fail on this occasion, as he felt proud to show me his skill. The gun was wiped, the powder measured, the ball patched with six-hundred thread linen, and the charge sent home with a hickory rod. We moved not a step from the place, for the squirrels were so numerous that it was unnecessary to go after them. Boon pointed to one of these animals which had observed us, and was crouched on a branch about fifty paces distant, and bade me mark well the spot where the ball should hit. He raised his piece gradually, until the *bead* (that being the name given by the Kentuckians to the *sight*) of the barrel was brought to a line with the spot which he intended to hit. The whip-like report resounded through the woods and along the hills in repeated echoes. Judge of my surprise, when I perceived that the ball had hit the piece of the bark immediately beneath the squirrel, and shivered it into splinters, the concussion produced by which had killed the animal, and sent it whirling into the air, as if it had been blown up by explosion of a powder magazine. Boon kept up his firing, and before many hours had elapsed, we had procured as many squirrels as we wished; for you must know, that to load a rifle requires only a moment, and that if it is wiped once after each shot, it will do duty for hours. Since that first interview with our veteran Boon, I have seen many other individuals perform the same feat.

The *snuffing of a candle* with a ball, I first had an opportunity of seeing near the banks of Green River, not far from a large pigeon-roost, to which I had previously made a visit. I heard many reports of guns during the early part of a dark night, and knowing them to be those of rifles, I went towards the spot to ascertain the cause. On reaching the place, I was welcomed by a dozen of tall stout men, who told me they were exercising, for the purpose of enabling them to shoot under night at the reflected light from the eyes of a deer or wolf, by torch-light, of which I shall give you an account somewhere else. A fire was blazing near, the smoke of which rose curling among the thick foliage of the trees. At a distance which rendered it scarcely distinguishable, stood a burning candle, as if intended for an offering to the goddess of night, but which in reality was only fifty yards from the spot on which we all stood. One man was within a few yards of it, to watch the effects of the shots, as well as to light the candle should it chance to go out, or to replace it should the shot cut it across. Each marksman shot in his turn. Some never hit either the snuff or the candle, and were congratulated with a loud laugh; while others actually snuffed the candle without putting it out, and were recompensed for their dexterity by numerous hurrahs. One of them, who was particularly expert, was very fortunate, and snuffed the candle three times out of seven, whilst all the other shots either put out the candle, or cut it immediately under the light.

Of the feats performed by the Kentuckians with the rifle, I could say more than might be expedient on the present occasion. In every thinly peopled portion of the State, it is rare to meet one without a gun of that description, as well as a tomahawk. By way of recreation they often cut off a piece of the bark of a tree, make a target of it, using a little powder wetted with water and saliva for the bull's eye, and shoot into the mark all the balls they have about them, picking them out of the wood again.

*Ornithological Biography, 1839*

### 3. The Confederate Line

SIDNEY LANIER

Stopping the horses a moment, they heard the sound of a cannon booming in the direction of Richmond. Another and another fol-

lowed. Presently came a loud report which seemed to loosen the battle as a loud thunder-peal releases the rain, and the long musketry-rattle broke forth.

“Haygood’s having a rough time of it. Let’s get there, hearties! It’ll be three more of us, anyhow,” said the major, sticking spurs to his horse.

They approach the outskirts of the storm of battle.

There lies a man, in bloody rags that were gray, with closed eyes. The first hailstone in the advancing edge of the storm has stricken down a flower. The dainty petal of life shrivels, blackens: yet it gives forth a perfume as it dies; his lips are moving,—he is praying.

The wounded increase. Here is a musket in the road: there is the languid hand that dropped it, pressing its fingers over a blue-edged wound in the breast. Weary pressure, and vain,—the blood flows steadily.

More muskets, cartridge-boxes, belts, greasy haversacks, strew the ground.

Here comes the stretcher-bearers. They leave a dripping line of blood. “Walk easy as you kin, boys,” comes from a blanket which four men are carrying by the corners. Easy walking is desirable when each step of your four carriers spurts out the blood afresh, or grates the rough edges of a shot bone in your leg.

The sound of a thousand voices, eager, hoarse, fierce all speaking together yet differently, comes through the leaves of the undergrowth. A strange multitudinous noise accompanies it,—a noise like the tremendous sibilation of a mile-long wave just before it breaks. It is the shuffling of two thousand feet as they march over dead leaves.

“Surely that can’t be reserves; Haygood didn’t have enough for his front! They must be falling back: hark! there’s a Yankee cheer. Good God! Here’s three muskets on the ground, boys! Come on!” said the major, and hastily dismounted.

The three plunge through the undergrowth. Waxen May-leaves sweep their faces; thorns pierce their hands; the honeysuckles cry “Wait!” with alluring perfumes; gnarled oak-twigs wound the wide-opened eyes.

It is no matter.

They emerge into an open space. A thousand men are talking, gesticulating, calling to friends, taking places in rank, abandoning them for others. They are in gray rags.

“Where’s Haygood?”

He is everywhere! On right flank cheering, on left flank rallying, in the center commanding: he is ubiquitous; he moves upon the low-sweeping wing of a battle genius: it is supernatural that he should be here and yonder at once. His voice suddenly rings out,—

“Form, men! We’ll run ’em out o’ that in a second. Reinforcements coming!”

“What’s the matter with the Yanks? Look, Phil!” says Briggs.

The Federals, having driven the small Confederate force from the railroad, stop in their charge as soon as they have crossed the track. Behind their first is a second line. As if on parade this second line advances to the railroad, and halts. “Ground arms!” Their muskets fall in a long row, as if in an armory-rack. The line steps two paces forward. It stoops over the track. It is a human machine with fifty thousand clamps, moved by levers infinitely flexible. Fifty thousand fingers insert themselves beneath the stringers of the road. All together! They lift, and lay over, bottom upwards, a mile of railroad.

But, O first line of Federals, you should not have stopped! The rags have rallied. Their line is formed, in the centre floats the cross-banner, to right and left gleam the bayonets like silver flame-jets, unwavering, deadly; these, with a thousand mute tongues, utter a silent yet magnificent menace.

“Charge! Steady, men!”

The rags flutter, the cross-flag spreads out and reveals its symbol, the two thousand sturdy feet in hideous brogans, or without cover, press forward. At first, it is a slow and stately movement; stately in the mass, ridiculous if we watch any individual leg, with its knee perhaps showing through an irregular hole in *such* pantaloons!

The step grows quicker. A few scattering shots from the enemy’s retiring skirmishers patter like the first big drops of the shower.

From the right of the ragged line now comes up a single long cry, as from the leader of a pack of hounds who has found the game. This cry has in it the uncontrollable eagerness of the sleuth-hound, together with a dry harsh quality that conveys an uncompromising hostility. It is the irresistible outflow of some fierce soul immeasurably enraged, and it is tinged with a jubilant tone, as if in anticipation of a speedy triumph and a satisfying revenge. It is a howl, a hoarse battle-cry, a cheer, and a congratulation, all in one.

They take it up in the centre, they echo it on the left, it swells, it runs along the line as fire leaps along the rigging of a ship. It

is as if some one pulled out in succession all the stops of the infernal battle-organ, but only struck one note which they all speak in different voices.

The gray line nears the blue one, rapidly. It is a thin gray wave, whose flashing foam is the glitter of steel bayonets. It meets with a swell in the ground, shivers a moment, then rolls on.

Suddenly thousands of tongues, tipped with red and issuing from smoke, speak deadly messages from the blue line. One volley? A thousand would not stop them now. Even if they were not veterans who know that it is safer at this crisis to push on than to fall back, they would still press forward. They have forgotten safety, they have forgotten life and death: their thoughts have converged into a focus which is the one simple idea,—to get to those men in blue, yonder. Rapid firing from the blue line brings rapid yelling from the gray.

But look! The blue line, which is like a distant strip of the sea, curls into little waves; these dash together in groups, then fly apart. The tempest of panic has blown upon it. The blue uniforms fly, flames issue from the gray line, it also breaks, the ragged men run, and the battle has degenerated to a chase.

*Tiger Lilies, 1867*

#### 4. Jim Bludso of the Prairie Belle

JOHN HAY

Wall, no! I can't tell whar he lives,  
Becase he don't live, you see;  
Leastways, he's got out of the habit  
Of livin' like you and me.  
Whar have you been for the last three year  
That you haven't heard folks tell  
How Jimmy Bludso passed in his checks  
The night of the Prairie Belle?

He weren't no saint,—them engineers  
Is all pretty much alike,—  
One wife in Natchez-under-the-Hill  
And another one here, in Pike;

A keerless man in his talk was Jim,  
And an awkward hand in a row,  
But he never flunked, and he never lied,—  
I reckon he never knowed how.

And this was all the religion he had,—  
To treat his engine well;  
Never be passed on the river;  
To mind the pilot's bell;  
And if ever the Prairie Belle took fire,—  
A thousand times he swore,  
He'd hold her nozzle agin the bank  
Till the last soul got ashore.

All boats has their day on the Mississip,  
And her day come at last,—  
The Movastar was a better boat,  
But the Belle she *wouldn't* be passed.  
And so she come tearin' along that night—  
The oldest craft on the line—  
With a nigger squat on her safety-valve,  
And her furnace crammed, rosin and pine.

The fire bust out as she clared the bar,  
And burnt a hole in the night,  
And quick as a flash she turned, and made  
For that willer-bank on the right.  
There was runnin' and cursin', but Jim yelled out,  
Over all the infernal roar,  
"I'll hold her nozzle agin the bank  
Till the last galoot's ashore."

Through the hot, black breath of the burnin' boat  
Jim Bludso's voice was heard,  
And they all had trust in his cussedness,  
And knowed he would keep his word.  
And, sure's you're born, they all got off  
Afore the smokestacks fell,—  
And Bludso's ghost went up alone  
In the smoke of the Prairie Belle.

He weren't no saint,—but at jedgment  
I'd run my chance with Jim,  
'Longside of some pious gentlemen  
That wouldn't shook hands with him.

He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing,—  
And went for it thar and then;  
And Christ ain't a-going to be too hard  
On a man that died for men.

*Pike County Ballads, 1871*

## 5. Caleb Catlum Meets John Henry

VINCENT McHUGH

Barney showed up two-three days later, red-eyed from carousing, with big patches bit out of his hide. I put him to work helping me round up my outfit for the North and by the end of the week we settled our passage in a keelboat bound upriver to St. Louis. We didn't pass no words 'bout Felice. We was both mighty pleased to be shut of all them women.

One morning two-three days upriver we tied up at the bank by a little shanty-town named Luna, Arkansas. Keelboat captain was taking on water and supplies. I left Barney on deck sleeping sprawled out in the sun and went moseying on off by myself to stretch the kinks out of my legs.

I meandered out past the town till I come to a patch of woodland. Sun was shining hot and still and I hear the noise of a buck-saw in a little clearing further on. Mighty pleasant sound she made, all mixed in 'mongst the bird-calls. I calculated I'd stroll out that way and show them boys the tricks of handling a blade.

Pretty soon I could make out something kind of sticking up top and when I come closer to it I see I was looking at what must be pretty near the biggest Negro in the world. Even Pop couldn't give him more'n an inch or two. He was standing there quiet in the middle of the clearing, looking down easy and smiling, whilst these two white Crackers with a bucksaw cut his leg off 'bout halfway to the knee.

They was mighty near through it when I come up to them.

"What's the trouble, boys?" I says. "Anything calls for a doctor I'll be glad to help out. Got some reputation in that line myself."

Crackers didn't take no notice at first, sawing away like they was in a dream. Then they let go the handles, slow-like, and stretched out on the ground, turning their chaws of tobacco over and spitting 'fore they spoke.

"Naw," one of 'em says. "We're jest aimin' to cut this nigger up fer firewood. Plumb tired out a'ready. Pow'ful slow work, ain't it, Fred?"

Fred he didn't say nothing for a minute. Just looks at me and kind of jerks his head at the other.

"I tell Lawgett he's plumb crazy," Fred drawls. "Get more wuk out'n a big strong nigger like that'n he'll ever be wuth cut up, even if firewood *is* two dollars a cord."

Lawgett he just stares at him like he was surprised.

"What you talkin' 'bout, Fred?" he says. "You ain't see two dollars since yore maw found you 'mongst that litter o' hound pups."

I give a look at the big Negro feller and he winks slow down at me.

"You better get back to work," I says. "That boy ain't goin' to stand there forever. Don't make no diff'rence *how* patient he is."

They just give a nod. After a spell they got up and begun sawing again, resting at the end of every stroke; but finally I hear the leg begin to crack and the big Negro topples over with a crash like an Oregon pine, grabbing at the top of a giant oak to ease his fall. Fred and Lawgett they just stood there wiping their faces and admiring him. Then they set to work to cut him in two right 'bout at the waist.

All this time the big boy ain't said a word, 'cepting once or twice he give a chuckle to himself. Them Crackers didn't get more'n a quarter way through him 'fore they laid off again, taking another chaw of tobacco and lodging it 'longside the teeth for further reference. Lawgett he looks at me kind of speculating.

"Now that feller Fred," he says, "he's plumb chickenhearted. Ain't fit to take a livin' out'n a country like this. He pretty near gagged the night we burnt a couple o' niggers down Menopah way. Calc'late he's got a mis'ry in his stomach."

"Don't care what you say 'bout them not bein' human," Fred tells him. "Maybe they ain't, but I bet they feel it when you burn 'em. Little, anyways," he says, looking mulish at the other one.

Lawgett he haw-haws. "Why, burn my soul!" he says. "That feller ain't got no more feelin' in him than a log o' wood. You ain't studied on 'em like I have. Nothin' inside 'em but sawdust, same's a young 'un's doll. You come an' give a look down 'long here."

He picks up the leg they sawed off and takes a squint at the cut. Seemed like he was right. Solid all the way through she was,

black stuff same as ebony, with black sawdust all 'round it.

"There now, you iggerunt old chicken-hearted whelp," Lawgett says. "Satisfied, ain't ya? How *kin* it hurt him when he ain't got nothin' but wood to his insides."

Fred he was stubborn. He said maybe they had some kind of feelings we didn't know nothing about and anyways they was worth more alive than dead.

The two of 'em went back to work and sawed and sawed till they got this Negro feller cut right through the middle. He was chuckling all the time and when they finally busted through his waist he give a big meller laugh. I was beginning to cotton to him.

'Bout noontime they set down under a tree and brung out some pig sandwiches and a gallon of corn liquor. Offered the big boy some, but he just kept shaking his head and smiling. I set down with 'em and done a little eating and drinking. Asked 'em who the Negro belonged to and Lawgett says he was his.

"Name o' John Henry," he says. "Workin'est nigger I ever see in my life but I can't keep him no longer. Got to have the cash."

We topped off the whole gallon and she seemed to put some inspiration into the boys. They went back and worked so hard that coming on sundown they had John Henry all cut and stacked 'cepting his head. They run into a lot of trouble working on his head with the axe. Couldn't find no grain to split.

More they took off him and the smaller he got, the more he seemed bent on laughing. I never come on a feller had so much aplomb in a ticklish situation and by the time they got down to sawing his head in two I looked on him same's if he was my own born brother. He kept laughing even while they sawed clean down through his mouth and I see his eye still winking at me from the pile when they had the last splinter stacked up and ready to burn.

Them boys was clean exhausted. Laid right down on the grass and just kept looking tender-like at that pile of stovewood. I figured she must run to three-four dozen cords.

"Well, fellers," I says. "Next thing is, you got to find a buyer, an' as luck'd have it you stumbled on one right under your nose. I come off a keelboat down here this mornin'. Got an order for some wood a piece further upriver an' I'm aimin' to be generous with you. Like the looks of 'er. I'll give you three dollars for the lot."

Them boys been bragging when they talked 'bout two dollars

a cord and my offer of three spondulix sounded like the price of the Louisiana purchase to 'em. They wasn't no barterers anyway. Didn't have the get-up to 'em. They didn't say a word for a half a minute, holding their breath case I'd change my mind. Finally Lawgett he just swallows and nods. I handed him over the three dollars and they shook hands 'thout saying a word and lit out home.

When I see they was out of sight I walks over to that heap of black wood.

"John Henry," I says. "If you're the man I been thinkin' you are, you'll put yourself together an' stand up out o' there on your own hind feet."

I hear a whoop of meller laughter coming out the stack, and in half a minute them chunks of wood begin flying 'round so fast I drops flat on the ground to keep from being hit. Pieces of back and belly and ribs started jumping up and joining into little hunks and then bigger ones, patches of black wool spinning, and big hands and feet coming out the mixup. Then the hands lifted up and squeezed the head together and jammed it onto his big neck, legs sprung onto the body, and last of all them big arms hooked into the shoulder-joints. He give himself a shake like a dog that's been sleeping too long in the sun and stands up on his big hind legs, straighter and taller'n a hill, same's if he'd never been tampered with.

Stands there laughing with a big sound, the way Pop done when I tried to fend him off from assaulting Mom; and I was laughing right back up at him, pleased as all get-out.

"John Henry," I says, "I'm Caleb Catlum o' Catlumville, an' you an' me ain't no more nor less than blood-brothers from now on."

He's laughing at me, pleased at hearing 'bout the way I feel.

"Caleb Catlum," he says down to me. "Now you done gone and got me laughin' again. Ah got laughs comin' from 'way deep down in mah belly. Ah got laughs bubblin' an' rumblin' up out of the ground Ah walk on. Ah'm John Henry the Natchral Man an' when Ah laughs the 'Lantic Ocean stops slappin' on the shore an' the waves o' the Pacific Ocean says to the little waves: 'Hush yo' mouf, chillun. Hush yo' mouf an' batten down yo' bref, 'cause John Henry the Natchral Man is laughin' his big laugh all the way cross the world.'"

*Caleb Catlum's America, 1936*

# Andrew Jackson

GERALD W. JOHNSON

Tradition relates of Rachel Jackson that she explained a family epidemic once by saying, "The General kicked the kivers off and we all cotch cold."

Historians and biographers have written many estimates of Andrew Jackson's career that might fairly be summed up in Rachel's words. The General kicked right lustily. He kicked off many of the warm wrappings that swathed the young republic from the bitter blasts of democracy. He kicked away the existing political system and substituted one more to his liking. He was the most uncomfortable of political bed-fellows.

Nor is there any lack of mourners to trace to his intervention most of the political ills that afflict us now. The Spoils System, the party machine, the distrust of ability and the worship of mediocrity and the peculiarly ruffianly politics that lead philosophers to despair of democracy are all laid to his charge. The fact that he neither invented nor first introduced into American political life any of these things is ignored, as Rachel ignored the predispositions that made her family susceptible to colds. It is all the General's fault. He kicked. We have suffered since. Let him bear the blame for our ills.

In so far as Jackson is concerned, it is difficult even for a sentimentalist to pump up any great moral indignation in his behalf. History perhaps never selected for an unjust burden shoulders better able to bear it. In life the General thrived on criticism; and since his death the damnation pronounced upon his reputation by countless learned clerks has not been able to bear it down. James Parton, writing fifteen years after Jackson was buried, noted the legend that in the backwoods citizens still went to the polls at each succeeding election and voted happily for Andrew Jackson. Parton thought it remarkable. One wonders what he would have thought had he known that the legend would survive when he, himself, had been in the grave for forty years. But survive it does. Remote precincts today are described by political workers as places where they are still voting for Andrew Jackson.

The man is a popular hero in the strictest sense of the word. He is the hero of the people, not of the *intelligentsia*. The people

still delight in the legends of his prowess, of his lurid language, of his imperious and dictatorial temper. The tale of his usurpations does not appall them, but delights them, for Americans have always loved a really masterful man. If Jackson's spiritual heir should appear now, there is every reason to believe America of the twentieth century would hail him as rapturously and follow him as blindly as it hailed and followed the hero a hundred years ago.

Therefore he remains a significant figure. His faults stand out with startling vividness. His errors are plain to the purblind. His weaknesses are obvious, his follies patent, his egregiousness inescapable. But the man will not collapse. His fame is still dear to the hearts of the people; therefore the prudent man will search diligently for some residuum after the faults, errors and follies have been taken into account. For if another appears with such qualities, even handicaps as gigantic as those under which Jackson labored cannot prevent his sweep to power. And the wise men of that day will be those who recognize him early and align themselves with him, rather than against him. It is this that gives him a severely practical significance in the century that has succeeded his own.

But to the impractical idealist, to the dilettante, to the curious seeker after the bizarre, the quaint, the colorful, Jackson makes as powerful an appeal as to the student of public affairs. For he was above all else vivid. He was a great actor, and on the national scene he staged the most gorgeous, colorful and romantic show in American history. He was fortunate in his supporting cast, it is true. Rarely indeed has Washington been presented with such a galaxy of talent as appeared in the administration and the opposition between 1828 and 1836. Webster, Clay, Calhoun, Taney, Livingston, Cass, Benton, Van Buren, John Quincy Adams—the length of the list of celebrated names of the period is amazing. But Jackson, alone, would have held the attention of the country. When he first came to Washington certain Senators were informed by alarmed friends that he had sworn to cut off their ears. He left the city pensively regretting his failure either to shoot Henry Clay or to hang John C. Calhoun. Yet during his tenure of power he committed neither homicide nor mayhem. Americans have never known how to resist a man who could talk like a pirate and act like a Presbyterian, and Jackson could do both to a perfection not approached by any of his successors until the days of Theodore Roosevelt.

And he had one great advantage over Roosevelt, namely, a record. Before he came to the Presidency, Jackson had both hanged and shot men, and all the while he was in the White House it was thrillingly uncertain when he might carry out some of his threats literally. He was a canny man, and it is possible that there never was a moment when he actually would have hanged Calhoun; but there were several moments when the country believed that if the President could but lay hands on the Vice-President, the latter's days would be numbered. It is said to be an accepted dictum in the theatrical world that if you can work into your play of three hours' length just thirty seconds during which the spectator will sit on the edge of his seat while the hair rises on the back of his neck, your success is assured, no matter what fills up the rest of the time. Jackson gave the country many such moments. It is no wonder that his performance was an immense success, greeted with applause that has come rolling down the years to the ears of a generation living a century after the curtain first rose.

Yet the rejoicing galleries had more serious, if perhaps no better, reasons for their plaudits than simply the entertainment purveyed to them by Andrew Jackson. He did throw down the bars that hedged them from effective participation in the conduct of their own government. He did destroy a sinister alliance between politics and finance that was swiftly reducing them to economic serfdom. He did shatter the Nullification movement, thereby postponing for twenty years the day when half a million of them had to die for the preservation of the Union. All these works were impermanent, no doubt, but they were effective for the time and the place. He richly earned the loyalty that common men gave him.

Yet Jackson lived for seventy-eight years and was President only eight. The Washington days were merely the resultant of the forces that had played upon him during the half century he existed before he reached the White House. To one who understood fully the fifty years in the wilderness, the eight in the capital would be as an open book.

Now the delight of studying Jackson lies in the fact that the first fifty years are less glamorous, perhaps, but not less gaudy, than the succeeding eight. He had actually become legendary before he became President, instead of afterward, as is the modern practice. This is attested by the fact that when Senators were told that General Jackson had arrived in town swearing to have their ears it apparently never occurred to them to discredit the report.

In the popular estimation he was already a man set apart so far from ordinary mortals as to be quite unpredictable. Probability did not apply to Jackson. He conformed to no known rules. He was a monster or a demigod, but not by any chance a man.

And so, to a large extent, he has since remained. Yet to the student who makes even a superficial examination of the record of his life it is apparent that few men who have figured largely in public affairs have exhibited more conspicuously the traits common to all humanity, both the worst and the best. Jackson was intensely human. It is merely the intensity of his humanity, indeed, that has given rise to the legends of a superman.

It was his fate to live on the frontier, where men were disciplined, indeed, but not with the discipline of settled communities. The discipline of the frontier hardens, but does not bleach. Life retains its color. Halftones, all delicacy of shading, are intensified into the primary hues, and characters become black and white, scarlet and yellow and blue. To the townsman, accustomed to pink and lavender and baby-blue souls, the strong colors of the frontier are barbarous and terrifying. But to the student who encounters them only in books they are gorgeous.

Jackson, as a small boy, comes reeling into American history with a sabre cut on his head and as the years gather upon him they gleam with steel and blood. It was a roaring career, resounding to the roars of cheering multitudes, of musketry, of artillery. It was a theatrical career in the style of Gallic romance, astonishingly like the career that Rostand imagined for Cyrano de Bergerac. Jackson relied on pistols, not a rapier, and he has never been accused of making a ballade or of being partial to Socrates and Galileo. But he was a great duellist, a great soldier and a great lover. He was fiery, quixotic, honest and loyal. He was curiously romantic and incessantly dramatized himself and his surroundings, often to the exquisite embarrassment of more prosaic men.

And he carried a handicap that was the equivalent of Cyrano's nose. Like the Frenchman's unfortunate feature, it was a fact that could not be denied, and the circumstance that he knew no evil impulse on his part had caused it only exacerbated his rage when it was mentioned. But after one man had died violently at his hands for the reason, as all the world believed, that he had talked loosely, men became exceedingly cautious. None but would-be suicides said "nose" to Cyrano or "adultery" to Andrew Jackson.

There would be neither sense nor dignity in denying that much

in his career the most sophisticated of moralists have found it difficult to defend. Dead men tell tales on Andrew Jackson. There were at least eight whose deaths are attributable, by the kindest interpretation, to qualities no more heroic than his impetuosity and ignorance. There were quarrels and brawls innumerable that did him no honor. There were moments when his mulish obstinacy did the state harm. These things are not only morally indefensible, but they are in themselves ugly and repellent.

But while a man may be judged on a single overt act, those who knew his whole story love him or hate him for the sum of all his deeds. Cyrano, too, came under the condemnation of the grave citizens of his time. But in the eyes of the generations that have followed, both men are saved by much the same qualities—courage, sentiment, vigor and resolution. In both, these characteristics were sometimes exaggerated into swashbuckling, sentimentality, presumption and obstinacy, but in the final accounting the exaggeration seems relatively unimportant.

So we see Andrew Jackson, in the perspective of a hundred years, cutting and slashing his way to power, a raucous fellow, an explosive, heavy-handed, dangerous and pestiferous fellow, but withal a man who had a code and lived up to it. He hated and loved and swore with a magnificence beyond all American experience. But he did not cringe, he did not fawn, he did not carry water on both shoulders. When he lost—and he lost heavily and frequently—he paid without whimpering. He loved a woman and lost her, and of all his innumerable wounds that hurt worst and longest.

Against admiration, respect and pity one must pile up mountains of crime if they are to inspire no affection. Affection for Andrew Jackson is impossible to avoid if one knows his story; for let his enemies say what they will, here was one American who carried himself with an air, unlettered, uncouth, unskilled in the graces of polite society, but none the less a *chevalier*. He is almost the only man who has figured in American public life of whom it is imaginable that he might have quit the earthly stage with the theatrical grace of Cyrano's closing lines:

“When I enter God's house my salutation shall sweep the blue threshold with something free from creases, free from stains, which I shall carry in spite of all of you—my plume!”

*Andrew Jackson, 1927*

# The Big Bear of Arkansas

T. B. THORPE

On a fine fall day, long time ago, I was trailing about for bar, and what should I see but fresh marks on the sassafras trees, about eight inches above any in the forests that I knew of. Says I, "them marks is a hoax, or it indicates the d—t bar that was ever grown." In fact, stranger, I couldn't believe it was real, and I went on. Again I saw the same marks, at the same height, and *I knew the thing lived*. That conviction came home to my soul like an earthquake. Says I, "here is something a-purpose for me: that bar is mine, or I give up the hunting business." The very next morning what should I see but a number of buzzards hovering over my cornfield. "The rascal has been there," said I, "for that sign is certain:" and, sure enough, on examining, I found the bones of what had been as beautiful a hog the day before, as was ever raised by a Buckeye. Then I tracked the critter out of the field to the woods, and all the marks he left behind, showed me that he was *the bar*.

Well, stranger, the first fair chase I ever had with that big critter, I saw him no less than three distinct times at a distance: the dogs run him over eighteen miles and broke down, my horse gave out, and I was as nearly used up as a man can be, made on *my* principle, *which is patent*. Before this adventure, such things were unknown to me as possible; but, strange as it was, that bar got me used to it before I was done with him; for he got so at last, that he would leave me on a long chase *quite easy*. How he did it, I never could understand. That a bar runs at all, is puzzling; but how this one could tire down and bust up a pack of hounds and a horse, that were used to overhauling everything they started after in no time, was past my understanding. Well, stranger, that bar finally got so sassy, that he used to help himself to a hog off my premises whenever he wanted one; the buzzards followed after what he left, and so between *bar and buzzard*, I rather think I was *out of pork*.

Well, missing that bar so often took hold of my vitals, and I wasted away. The thing had been carried too far, and it reduced me in flesh faster than an ager. I would see that bar in every thing I did; *he hunted me*, and that, too, like a devil, which I

began to think he was. While in this fix, I made preparations to give him a last brush, and be done with it. Having completed every thing to my satisfaction, I started at sunrise, and to my great joy, I discovered from the way the dogs run, that they were near to him; finding his trail was nothing, for that had become as plain to the pack as a turnpike road. On we went, and coming to an open country, what should I see but the bar very leisurely ascending a hill, and the dogs close at his heels, either a match for him in speed, or else he did not care to get out of their way—I don't know which. But wasn't he a beauty, though? I loved him like a brother.

On he went, until he came to a tree, the limbs of which formed a crotch about six feet from the ground. Into this crotch he got and seated himself, the dogs yelling all around it; and there he sat eyeing them as quiet as a pond in low water. A green-horn friend of mine, in company, reached shooting distance before me, and blazed away, hitting the critter in the centre of his forehead. The bar shook his head as the ball struck it, and then walked down from that tree as gently as a lady would from a carriage. 'Twas a beautiful sight to see him do that—he was in such a rage that he seemed to be as little afraid of the dogs as if they had been sucking pigs; and the dogs warn't slow in making a ring around him at a respectful distance, I tell you; even Bowie-knife, himself, stood off. Then the way his eyes flashed—why the fire of them would have singed a cat's hair; in fact that bar was in a *wrath all over*. Only one pup came near him, and he was brushed out so totally with the bar's left paw, that he entirely disappeared; and that made the old dogs more cautious still. In the meantime, I came up, and taking deliberate aim as a man should do, at his side, just back of his foreleg, *if my gun did not snap*, call me a coward, and I won't take it personal. Yes, stranger, *it snapped*, and I could not find a cap about my person. While in this predicament, I turned round to my fool friend—says I, “Bill,” says I, “you're an ass—you're a fool—you might as well have tried to kill that bar by barking the tree under his belly, as to have done it by hitting him in the head. Your shot has made a tiger of him, and blast me, if a dog gets killed or wounded when they come to blows, I will stick my knife into your liver, I will—” my wrath was up. I had lost my caps, my gun had snapped, the fellow with me had fired at the bar's head, and I expected every moment to see him close in with the dogs, and kill a dozen of them at least. In this thing I was mistaken, for the bar leaped over the ring

formed by the dogs, and giving a fierce growl, was off—the pack, of course, in full cry after him.

The run this time was short, for coming to the edge of a lake the varmint jumped in, and swam to a little island in the lake, which it reached just a moment before the dogs. "I'll have him now," said I, for I had found my caps in the *lining of my coat*—so, rolling a log into the lake, I paddled myself across to the island, just as the dogs had cornered the bar in a thicket. I rushed up and fired—at the same time the critter leaped over the dogs and came within three feet of me, running like mad; he jumped into the lake, and tried to mount the log I had just deserted, but every time he got half his body on it, it would roll over and send him under; the dogs, too, got around him, and pulled him about, and finally Bowie-knife clenched with him, and they sunk into the lake together. Stranger, about this time, I was excited, and I stripped off my coat, drew my knife, and intended to have taken a part with Bowie-knife myself, when the bar rose to the surface. But the varmint staid under—Bowie-knife came up alone, more dead than alive, and with the pack came ashore. "Thank God," said I, "the old villain has got his deserts at last." Determined to have the body, I cut a grapevine for a rope, and dove down where I could see the bar in the water, fastened my queer rope to his leg, and fished him, with great difficulty, ashore. Stranger, may I be chewed to death by young alligators, if the thing I looked at wasn't a *she bar, and not the old critter after all*. The way matters got mixed on that island was onaccountably curious, and thinking of it made me more than ever convinced that I was hunting the devil himself. I went home that night and took to my bed—the thing was killing me. The entire team of Arkansaw in bar-hunting, acknowledged himself used up, and the fact sunk into my feelings like a snagged boat will in the Mississippi. I grew as cross as a bar with two cubs and a sore tail. The thing got out 'mong my neighbours, and I was asked how come on that individu-al that never lost a bar once started? and if that same individ-u-al didn't wear telescopes when he turned a she bar, of ordinary size, into an old he one, a little larger than a horse? "Perhaps," said I, "friends"—getting wrathful—"perhaps you want to call somebody a liar." "Oh, no," said they, "we only heard such things as being *rather common* of late, but we don't believe one word of it; oh, no,"—and then they would ride off and laugh like so many hyenas over a dead nigger.

It was too much, and I determined to catch that bar, go to Texas,

or die,—and I made my preparations accordin'. I had the pack shut up and rested. I took my rifle to pieces and iled it. I put caps in every pocket about my person, *for fear of the lining*. I then told my neighbours, that on Monday morning—naming the day—I would start THAT BAR, and bring him home with me, or they might divide my settlement among them, the owner having disappeared. Well, stranger, on the morning previous to the great day of my hunting expedition, I went into the woods near my house, taking my gun and Bowie-knife along, just *from habit*, and there sitting down also from habit, what should I see, getting over my fence, but *the bar!* Yes, the old varmint was within a hundred yards of me, and the way he walked *over that fence*—stranger, he loomed up like a *black mist*, he seemed so large, and he walked right towards me. I raised myself, took deliberate aim, and fired. Instantly the varmint wheeled, gave a yell, and *walked through the fence* like a falling tree would through a cobweb. I started after, but was tripped up by my inexpressibles, which either from habit, or the excitement of the moment, were about my heels, and before I had really gathered myself up, I heard the old varmint groaning in a thicket near by, like a thousand sinners, and by the time I reached him he was a corpse. Stranger, it took five niggers and myself to put that carcass on a mule's back, and old long-ears waddled under the load, as if he was foundered in every leg of his body, and with a common whopper of a bar, he would have trotted off, and enjoyed himself. 'Twould astonish you to know how big he was: I made a *bed-spread of his skin*, and the way it used to cover my bar mattress, and leave several feet on each side to tuck up, would have delighted you. It was in fact a creation bar, and if it had lived in Samson's time, and had met him, in a fair fight, it would have licked him in the twinkling of a dice-box. But, strangers, I never like the way I hunted, and *missed him*. There is something curious about it, I could never understand,—and I never was satisfied at his giving in so easy at last. Perhaps, he had heard of my preparations to hunt him the next day, so he jist come in, like Capt. Scott's coon, to save his wind to grunt with in dying; but that ain't likely. My private opinion is, that that bar was an *unhunnable bar, and died when his time come*.

*The Spirit of the Times, 1841*

# Louisiana Journal

LESTANT PRUDHOMME

TUESDAY—JANUARY 29TH, 1850

For the last fortnight we have had wet weather: the rain incessant and the temperature high. From news received it appears that it was the same on Red River, and the natural consequence of so much rain was that the waters commenced rising at a rapid rate, and frightened many planters who had but a few months ago experienced the effects of the unprecedented rise of '49. Many commenced gathering their cattle so as to be ready for the emergency. However, although a great rise above has been reported, the inhabitants of this section of the country need entertain no fears, for the water has almost stopped rising and before the second freshet is felt here the water will be low enough for the channel to contain the surplus.

Having finished my course of practical surveying with Mr. Walmsley, deputy surveyor, and afterwards having assisted on the 21st at the union of Miss Aspasia Lambre and Simeon Hart, I this day resumed my study of law and commenced again reading Chitty's Blackstone from the first beginning. I am studying under J. G. Campbell, an eminent lawyer of Natchitoches.

Yesterday, during the whole morning, wild pigeons passed from one swamp to the other. It was really a most astonishing thing to see so many large flocks flying over with hardly any interruption. Many of them were killed, for such persons as had any gun in their possession made use of them, and this fact was the cause of my not commencing my studies yesterday as I had concluded to do.

This evening, at about five o'clock, just as I had put away my law book and had taken my stick and reading book to go and take a walk, I heard of Edward Cloutier's arrival from Louisville where he had gone to study the profession of dentist, and had been so unfortunate as not to be able to find an institution nor any dentist that would consent to teach him. Immediately my designs were changed; I had my horse saddled and I went to see the new-comer. Everybody was surprised at this young man's return but when the causes became known, it was well conceived. His father, however, seemed not to enter in the same spirit, and appeared much troubled at his return.

## THURSDAY—31ST

The cold gave place to a warm and windless day.

In the morning we had the visit of Mrs. Cloutier and her son Edward; the former went to spend the day at Aunt Benjamin's and the latter remained with me.

In the evening, after my studies were over, we both went off from here on foot to pay a visit to our Aunt Benjamin.

The water is still falling, a circumstance that pleases everyone, as a strong rise is reported above.

In the evening on my way to my aunt Benjamin's I met my aunt Baptiste, upon whom, not without some trouble, I prevailed to come and spend the night at home.

Felix Metoyer accompanied my cousin and me back. The evening was spent most agreeably, everyone appearing to be in fine spirits. The conversation and the little games and amusements going on were so animated no one thought of retiring before eleven o'clock. We had also to enliven the party the company of Mr. and Mrs. Adolphe Prudhomme.

## FEBRUARY 8TH

After breakfast, to quit the table and form the happy family circle around a good and hot fire place was done by unanimous consent, then went on the ordinary conversation of the general news, home and foreign, things that are of importance only in small places or in the country were in their turn talked of, such as the most important subject of where each one present intended to spend the day. Mrs. Phanor's trip to town and also that of her sister, Mrs. Archinard, when their return, etc., etc., when to the satisfaction of all present Mr. Phanor walked in and helped to adorn the circle, the conversation never, however, tarrying and new subjects being constantly brought on the *tapis*.

In the meantime, I had my horse saddled, however without knowing which way to go and spend my Sunday, but the arrival of Emile and Gabriel Prudhomme soon settled the question, and I spent the day at home, entertaining my company as well as possible. A little shooting with the blow-gun and a fowl piece was practised. At about 11 o'clock A.M., Phanor went home, there to receive his company, and had a real *diner de garcon*, no ladies being present, and, to increase the pleasure of the guests, the steamboat passing by put out a barrel of fine and nice oysters. At four in the evening I went off with my two friends, paid a visit to Narcisse Prudhomme,

where my companions found their parents. Thence I went and supped with them; some time after supper I went off to go and see why John and Edward had not come home Saturday evenings as they intended. However, I found no one up at Mr. Cloutier's (my uncle) and was on the point of returning home when the door was opened by a servant bawling out the apostrophe, "Misier di vous entre." In I stepped and was introduced without any ceremony into the bed room. My uncle then got up, took me in the parlor where we sat in *tete-a-tete* before a good fire and talked and puffed till about half past ten P.M., when I took leave of him and returned home, with once in a while having a cold N.E. wind full in the face. N. B. Last night, reading a New York paper, I saw a northwestern passage had been found and also a new continent which, however, was not approached very near, the cold being too excessive.

#### SUNDAY—10TH, 1850

Felix and myself left in the morning after breakfast to go to town and meet Mrs. Benjamin and Mr. and Mrs. Adolphe. I assisted at Mass. The church was full. There was no preaching, the regulations to be followed during Lent were read and some remarks, and very appropriate ones, on the manner the regulations were to be fulfilled.

After Mass I started with several persons to go to the Convent and see my cousins, but just as I was going to enter, perceiving there were many persons present, and consequently fearing not to have a seat where I wished, I came back. Afterwards I was sorry for not having entered for I heard that instead of one parlor as before there were two and that there was sufficient room.

I found the town very dull and did not know what to do with myself and played one or two games of billiards to while away the time.

I had the pleasure of spending a pleasant *soiree* at Dr. Kerell's where I and others had been invited. We had some music part of the time. I was troubled with both of my feet that I had hurt yesterday at the hunt, the wound however being slight, but notwithstanding painful, so I did not dance but one set.

#### TUESDAY—12TH, 1850

##### *Mardi Gras*

It rained the whole night and continued till 5 P.M.

Several young men and I intended to go and spend the day at

Theophile's and stay there over night to feast the day, but the inclement state of the weather prevented us.

The *Doswell* came up at 11 P.M. She stopped here to put out some freight and I put a letter on board for a young man, J. Bolwing, from Baltimore, who has come to New Orleans with negroes he has to sell, and has written to me to know whether any member of my family would take them. I could not give him any positive answer, and begged him to wait a few days when I would be able to give him positive information. My uncle Adolphe spent a part of the evening here; my father had sent for him to know if he would not buy two or three of the whole lot (twelve) of those negroes—he buying the rest. The wind at 6 P.M. turned to the N.W.

#### FRIDAY—15TH

This morning a white frost spread over the earth, and ice was to be seen in small holes of water.

I returned from my uncle's at 11 P.M. I left him taming some wild mules.

Father went to his plantation and in the evening, shortly after dinner, mother went at Phanor's where the children went to meet her after school. Thus I was left alone in the house quietly reading the dry and uninteresting *Blackstone*. The Governess remained in her room, and I had not the pleasure of seeing her before the family returned. For several days past the river has been rising pretty fast. It has already attained what it had lost and is still rising. From 3 P.M. yesterday to 4 P.M. today it has risen 7 inches.

This evening I had a little trouble correcting one of the slaves who attempted to run away from me and bruised my hand a little and sprained my thumb. Thus it seems that in this world we must constantly suffer; my toe is hardly cured that I must hurt some other part of my body.

#### SUNDAY—24TH

The weather was again cloudy but there was no rain. I spent the day most pleasantly and agreeably paying visits to different ladies and to the priest, Mr. Martin, whom I had heard spoken of very highly, and who came up to my expectations. I found him to be a polite gentleman, entertaining and receiving his company admirably well. He showed me a fine collection of natural curiosities, and though I have visited many museums, I found things I had never seen. After spending with him about half an hour very pleasantly,

I took leave, highly pleased. He has been here about six or seven weeks, and preached a sermon during Mass which the whole audience pronounced excellent. It was profuse with deep, profound, conclusive, and convincing reasonings, beautifully worded, and delivered in an audible and plain voice, with appropriate and oratorical gestures.

At dinner we had the ever agreeable company of three or four young ladies with whom Felix and I spent our time most pleasantly. At about eight the company went to the convent to assist at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, after which we had the pleasure of seeing several young ladies, some my cousins (all charming and beautiful), and spent with them several hours. During that time Felix, Ursin Lambre, and I were taken through the whole establishment by the superior, Mother Landry, whom we had the good fortune of delighting with our (as she expressed it) modest deportment in the chapel. The establishment is spacious, the study rooms are large, the dormitories comfortable and orderly and adorned with neat and good beds, the play grounds vast, everything well calculated to promote the happiness and comfort of those lovely creatures that are there to be secluded from the world, till they come out to be the pride and glory of society.

#### TUESDAY—19TH

How strange . . . how wonderful! how incomprehensible this climate. Last night most beautiful weather. The wind coming from the north. The firmament studded with millions of bright luminaries, darting forth their brilliant and sweet light, to guide the weary traveller during the absence of the powerful emperor of the day.

Nothing in consequence is expected but a white frost in the morning. But lo, to everyone's surprise a change in the night was operated, and long before day-break the reservoir of heaven overflowed and the earth is bathed in the tears of angels, whose mourning for the sins of men are heard like the distant thunders, far off in the west.

I spent the morning in my room with Edward Cloutier, whom I entertained on the subject that occupied the principal part of my time Saturday and Sunday. Proof I was looking for, and proofs I found so natural, and so convincing, that if the works whence I derived them had been at hand, I would have maintained my position with more success and demonstrated its correctness with so much force as to overthrow the great opposition against which I was arguing.

Soon after dinner, perceiving the smoke of the *Hecla* that was coming up, Edward and I went to Phanor's landing where we presumed she would stop. The cotton reported falling, and the favorable and masterly speech of Webster, which it is supposed will bring the slavery question to an amicable conclusion, was received. Before returning we spent some agreeable moments at the house with my uncle and aunt Adolphe, who were alone. When we were about leaving, Leonce and Felix arrived, which circumstance detained us a little longer.

After our return, I got at my studies and read till 7 o'clock at night. Leonce and Felix came here and spent a part of the evening. They came with Father who had gone a moment at Phanor's. It was agreed that Edward and I, and perhaps Julie, would go to sup at Phanor's and spend the *soiree*. However, Julie did not wish to go, Edward was afraid to expose himself as the weather was inclement, so that I also would not have gone, but had to do so, having to see Felix to know at what time in the morning we would start for our premeditated fishing party, but only went after supper and did not stay long.

Leonce and Edward said they also would come, and all four of us were in good spirits, proposing to ourselves fine fun.

#### MONDAY—15TH

I commenced reading Blackstone early this morning, and before breakfast, taking my book with me, I went at Phanor's. What I read then is all I could read the whole day. A bricklayer came soon after breakfast to finish the cistern, and before I could get him everything that was necessary it was nearly twelve. At about 2 P.M. the *Doswell* arrived, and as she had a great deal of freight on board for the plantation I was busy the best part of the afternoon, and as I had to entertain Dr. Kerell, who arrived while we were at dinner, the evening went off without my being able to come to my studies.

Dr. Danglasse came here to hold a consultation with Dr. Kerell about the governess who, though she teaches school no longer, remains here. After the doctors had left I wrote a long letter to my father to send by the *Doswell*.

The overseer told me this day he would have to replant nearly the whole crop of cotton and that there was much corn missing. This is generally the case everywhere; the crops have come up very badly. Wherever the cotton is up it looks green, but the seed and roots are perfectly rotten. Adolphe went to my father's plantation on the

Bondieu, and this evening when he came back he told me the cotton had to be planted entirely over and there were no seeds, but that the overseer here had told him he could spare as much as would be necessary. Upon this I immediately dispatched a boy to the plantation to tell the overseer to come over in the morning with sufficient hands to transport some cotton seed.

#### TUESDAY—16TH

I was kept busy the whole morning, tending to the plantation business.

At about five Leonce and Felix came here on a visit, and left at about six. Just at that time my aunt Adolphe arrived with Phanor's children, but the boat which I had been expecting the whole day was coming around the point, and as I had letters which had been written here and others that had been sent to me for the same purpose, I repaired to the bank. The Captain, to whom I had spoken yesterday for the letters I would have to put on board, did not stop, but passed at full speed and thus I had to throw the stick upon which I had previously attached the letters. It fell on board but unfortunately bounced back and fell overboard. It being soon sent to shore by the waves, I lost no time but took a horse and cut across the next point where I got before the boat, but she passed so fast and far from shore that again I was disappointed; the stick not reaching it; then there was no other chance remaining, and when I had succeeded in getting the letters, which was not without trouble, I started on my way home much disappointed, and far from admiring the Captain's kindness to whom I had previously spoken, being anxious not to miss the present opportunity. I felt much more sorry on account of the other letters, which were business letters, than for mine.

When I came back there was no one here, all having gone at Phanor's to receive the Bishop and the Parish priest, who came to spend the night. I got ready and went to meet the company. I got there while they were at supper, and my disappointment having taken away my appetite, and hence not wishing to disturb them, I waited on the gallery till the meal was over. I spent my time pleasantly, but it would have been more pleasant had I succeeded with my letters. We returned at half past ten.

A peddler stopped here today. The bricklayer went at Emile Sompayrac's to commence a cistern.

#### THURSDAY—18TH

Mother started early this morning to go and see Mrs. Hippolyte Hertzog's who has been sick with the fever for several days. After breakfast, desiring to see Adolphe I went at Phanor's and remained after having done what I wanted, in the school house, to see how the school was going on; and there wrote a letter to my brother Anthony, who is at the Western Military Institute, Blue Dick, Kentucky.

I had not yet got to the house when I was met by a negro boy who wanted something. A few minutes after having satisfied him I was again disturbed by others, and thus kept busy till near 11 A.M. And then retiring to my room I there endeavoured to make a hair line, but only succeeded after dinner, soon after taking that meal having resumed the task. I then commenced reading Blackstone, and took a long walk alone, but on my return I met some ladies and gentlemen who were also taking a walk, and I thus returned in company. I sent a little boy to town in order to have some sand brought by the market cart that is to come tonight. The hands have not yet commenced sowing the cotton, being busily engaged replacing the corn.

#### SATURDAY—27TH

I crossed over this morning to go and see Lafille, an old woman, to whom my grandfather has given her liberty, and who nursed me when I was but an infant baby. She has been with the fever for some time and for the last six months has been always unwell. Her disease is old age. The fever has reduced her to a rather low state, and fears are entertained for her life. I found her better this morning, having no fever, and a good face. On my return at the house I sent her some little delicacies or dainties and marked a quilt for a girl to sew, and then it being nearly dinner time, I sat to the piano and recreated myself a little playing some few tunes I know. After dinner I got at my studies and kept on till about ten but not without interruption. For, according to my orders, I was called to put up my lamp I had given to clean, and, a very essential screw being lost, I spent a good while looking for it, together with the boy that had cleaned the lamp. After having given myself a great deal of trouble I left and returned to my studies, hoping that in the morning I would be more successful in my searches.

I did not enjoy my meals very well, taking them, contrary to my habit, all alone, and though I was busy the whole day I found the

time passed on very slowly. I remain alone tonight, mother having been prevented by the rain from coming. The water is rising very fast. It has risen at least eight feet.

“Diary of Lestant Prudhomme,” in Lyle Saxon’s *Old Louisiana*, 1929

# Learning the River

MARK TWAIN

What with lying on the rocks four days at Louisville, and some other delays, the poor old Paul Jones fooled away about two weeks in making the voyage from Cincinnati to New Orleans. This gave me a chance to get acquainted with one of the pilots, and he taught me how to steer the boat, and thus made the fascination of river life more potent than ever for me.

It also gave me a chance to get acquainted with a youth who had taken deck passage—more's the pity; for he easily borrowed six dollars of me on a promise to return to the boat and pay it back to me the day after we should arrive. But he probably died or forgot, for he never came. It was doubtless the former, since he had said his parents were wealthy, and he only traveled deck passage because it was cooler.

I soon discovered two things. One was that a vessel would not be likely to sail for the mouth of the Amazon under ten or twelve years; and the other was that the nine or ten dollars still left in my pocket would not suffice for so imposing an exploration as I had planned, even if I could afford to wait for a ship. Therefore it followed that I must contrive a new career. The Paul Jones was now bound for St. Louis. I planned a siege against my pilot, and at the end of three hard days he surrendered. He agreed to teach me the Mississippi River from New Orleans to St. Louis for five hundred dollars, payable out of the first wages I should receive after graduating. I entered upon the small enterprise of "learning" twelve or thirteen hundred miles of the great Mississippi River with the easy confidence of my time of life. If I had really known what I was about to require of my faculties, I should not have had the courage to begin. I supposed that all a pilot had to do was to keep his boat in the river, and I did not consider that that could be much of a trick, since it was so wide.

The boat backed out from New Orleans at four in the afternoon, and it was "our watch" until eight. Mr. B—, my chief, "straightened her up," plowed her along past the sterns of the other boats that lay at the Levee, and then said, "Here, take her; shave those steamships as close as you'd peel an apple." I took the wheel, and my heart went down into my boots; for it seemed to me that we

were about to scrape the side off every ship in the line, we were so close. I held my breath and began to claw the boat away from the danger; and I had my own opinion of the pilot who had known no better than to get us into such peril, but I was too wise to express it. In half a minute I had a wide margin of safety intervening between the Paul Jones and the ships; and within ten seconds more I was set aside in disgrace, and Mr. B— was going into danger again and flaying me alive with abuse of my cowardice. I was stung, but I was obliged to admire the easy confidence with which my chief loafed from side to side of his wheel, and trimmed the ships so closely that disaster seemed ceaselessly imminent. When he had cooled a little he told me that the easy water was close ashore and the current outside, and therefore we must hug the bank, up-stream, to get the benefit of the former, and stay well out, downstream, to take advantage of the latter. In my own mind I resolved to be a down-stream pilot and leave the up-streaming to people dead to prudence.

Now and then Mr. B— called my attention to certain things. Said he, "This is Six-Mile Point." I assented. It was pleasant enough information, but I could not see the bearing of it. I was not conscious that it was a matter of any interest to me. Another time he said, "This is Nine-Mile Point." Later he said, "This is Twelve-Mile Point." They were all about level with the water's edge; they all looked about alike to me; they were monotonously unpicturesque. I hoped Mr. B— would change the subject. But no; he would crowd up around a point, hugging the shore with affection, and then say: "The slack water ends here, abreast this bunch of China-trees; now we cross over." So he crossed over. He gave me the wheel once or twice, but I had no luck. I either came near chipping off the edge of a sugar plantation, or else I yawed too far from shore, and so I dropped back into disgrace and got abused again.

The watch was ended at last, and we took supper and went to bed. At midnight the glare of a lantern shone in my eyes, and the night watchman said:—

"Come! turn out!"

And then he left. I could not understand this extraordinary procedure; so I presently gave up trying to, and dozed off to sleep. Pretty soon the watchman was back again, and this time he was gruff. I was annoyed. I said:—

"What do you want to come bothering around here in the middle of the night for? Now as like as not I'll not get to sleep again to-night."

The watchman said:—

“Well, if this an’t good, I’m blest.”

The “off-watch” was just turning in, and I heard some brutal laughter from them, and such remarks as “Hello, watchman! an’t the new cub turned out yet? He’s delicate, likely. Give him some sugar in a rag and send for the chambermaid to sing rock-a-by-baby to him.”

About this time Mr. B— appeared on the scene. Something like a minute later I was climbing the pilot-house steps with some of my clothes on and the rest in my arms. Mr. B— was close behind commenting. Here was something fresh—this thing of getting up in the middle of the night to go to work. It was a detail in piloting that had never occurred to me at all. I knew that boats ran all night, but somehow I had never happened to reflect that somebody had to get up out of a warm bed to run them. I began to fear that piloting was not quite so romantic as I had imagined it was; there was something very real and work-like about this new phase of it.

It was a rather dingy night, although a fair number of stars were out. The big mate was at the wheel, and he had the old tub pointed at a star and was holding her straight up the middle of the river. The shores on either hand were not much more than a mile apart, but they seemed wonderfully far away and ever so vague and indistinct. The mate said:—

“We’ve got to land at Jones’s plantation, sir.”

The vengeful spirit in me exulted. I said to myself, I wish you joy of your job, Mr. B—; you’ll have a good time finding Mr. Jones’s plantation such a night as this; and I hope you never *will* find it as long as you live.

Mr. B— said to the mate:—

“Upper end of the plantation, or the lower?”

“Upper.”

“I can’t do it. The stumps there are out of water at this stage. It’s no great distance to the lower, and you’ll have to get along with that.”

“All right, sir. If Jones don’t like it he’ll have to lump it, I reckon.”

And then the mate left. My exultation began to cool and my wonder to come up. Here was a man who not only proposed to find this plantation on such a night, but to find either end of it you preferred. I dreadfully wanted to ask a question, but I was carrying about as many short answers as my cargo-room would admit of, so I held my peace. All I desired to ask Mr. B— was

the simple question whether he was ass enough to really imagine he was going to find that plantation on a night when all plantations were exactly alike and all the same color. But I held in. I used to have fine inspirations of prudence in those days.

Mr. B— made for the shore and soon was scraping it, just the same as if it had been daylight. And not only that, but singing—  
“Father in heaven the day is declining,” etc.

It seemed to me that I had put my life in the keeping of a peculiarly reckless outcast. Presently he turned on me and said:—

“What’s the name of the first point above New Orleans?”

I was gratified to be able to answer promptly, and I did. I said I didn’t know.

“Don’t *know*?”

This manner jolted me. I was down at the foot again, in a moment. But I had to say just what I had said before.

“Well, you’re a smart one,” said Mr. B—. “What’s the name of the *next* point?”

Once more I didn’t know.

“Well, this beats anything. Tell me the name of *any* point or place I told you.”

I studied a while and decided that I couldn’t.

“Look-a-here! What do you start out from, above Twelve-Mile Point, to cross over?”

“I—I—don’t know.”

“You—you—don’t know?” mimicking my drawling manner of speech. “What *do* you know?”

“I—I—nothing, for certain.”

“By the great Caesar’s ghost I believe you! You’re the stupidest dunderhead I ever saw or ever heard of, so help me Moses! The idea of *you* being a pilot—*you*! Why, you don’t know enough to pilot a cow down a lane.”

Oh, but his wrath was up! He was a nervous man, and he shuffled from one side of his wheel to the other as if the floor was hot. He would boil a while to himself, and then overflow and scald me again.

“Look-a-here! What do you suppose I told you the names of those points for?”

I tremblingly considered a moment, and then the devil of temptation provoked me to say:—

“Well—to—to—be entertaining, I thought.”

This was a red rag to the bull. He raged and stormed so (he was crossing the river at the time) that I judge it made him blind,

because he ran over the steering oar of a trading scow. Of course the traders sent up a volley of red-hot profanity. Never was a man so grateful as Mr. B— was: because he was brim full, and here were subjects who would *talk back*. He threw open a window, thrust his head out, and such an eruption followed as I never had heard before. The fainter and farther away the scowmen's curses drifted, the higher Mr. B— lifted his voice and the weightier his adjectives grew. When he closed the window he was empty. You could have drawn a seine through his system and not caught curses enough to disturb your mother with. Presently he said to me in the gentlest way:—

“My boy, you must get a little memorandum-book, and every time I tell you a thing, put it down right away. There's only one way to be a pilot, and that is to get this entire river by heart. You have to know it just like A B C.”

That was a dismal revelation to me; for my memory was never loaded with anything but blank cartridges. However, I did not feel discouraged long. I judged that it was best to make some allowances, for doubtless Mr. B— was “stretching.” Presently he pulled a rope and struck a few strokes on the big bell. The stars were all gone, now, and the night was as black as ink. I could hear the wheels churn along the bank, but I was not entirely certain that I could see the shore. The voice of the invisible watchman called up from the hurricane deck:—

“What's this, sir?”

“Jones's plantation.”

I said to myself, I wish I might venture to offer a small bet that it isn't. But I did not chirp. I only waited to see. Mr. B— handled the engine bells, and in due time, the boat's nose came to the land, a torch glowed from the forecastle, a man skipped ashore, a darky's voice on the bank said, “Gimme de carpet-bag, Mars' Jones,” and the next moment we were standing up the river again, all serene. I reflected deeply a while, and then said,—but not aloud—Well, the finding of that plantation was the luckiest accident that ever happened; but it couldn't happen again in a hundred years. And I fully believed it *was* an accident, too.

By the time we had gone seven or eight hundred miles up the river, I had learned to be a tolerably plucky up-stream steersman, in daylight, and before we reached St. Louis, I had made a trifle of progress in night-work, but only a trifle. I had a note-book that fairly bristled with the names of towns, “points,” bars, islands, bends, reaches, etc.; but the information was to be found only in the

notebook—none of it was in my head. It made my heart ache to think I had only got half of the river set down; for as our watch was four hours off and four hours on, day and night, there was a long four-hour gap in my book for every time I had slept since the voyage began.

My chief was presently hired to go on a big New Orleans boat, and I packed my satchel and went with him. She was a grand affair. When I stood in her pilot-house I was so far above the water that I seemed perched on a mountain; and her decks stretched so far away, fore and aft, below me, that I wondered how I could ever have considered the little Paul Jones a large craft. There were other differences, too. The Paul Jones's pilot-house was a cheap, dingy battered rattle-trap, cramped for room: but here was a sumptuous glass temple; room enough to have a dance in; showy red and gold window-curtains; an imposing sofa; leather cushions and a back to the high bench where visiting pilots sit, to spin yarns and "look at the river;" bright, fanciful "cuspadores" instead of a broad wooden box filled with sawdust; nice new oil-cloth on the floor; a hospitable big stove for winter; a wheel as high as my head, costly with inlaid work; a wire tiller-rope; bright brass knobs for the bells; and a tidy, white-aproned, black "texas-tender," to bring up tarts and ices and coffee during mid-watch, day and night. Now this was "something like;" and so I began to take heart once more to believe that piloting was a romantic sort of occupation after all. The moment we were under way I began to prowl about the great steamer and fill myself with joy. She was as clean and as dainty as a drawing-room; when I looked down her long, gilded saloon, it was like gazing through a splendid tunnel; she had an oil-picture, by some gifted sign-painter, on every state-room door; she glittered with no end of prism-fringed chandeliers; the clerk's office was elegant, the bar was marvelous, and the bar-keeper had been barbered and upholstered at incredible cost. The boiler deck (i.e., the second story of the boat, so to speak) was as spacious as a church, it seemed to me; so with the forecandle; and there was no pitiful handful of deckhands, firemen, and roustabouts down there, but a whole battalion of men. The fires were fiercely glaring from a long row of furnaces, and over them were eight huge boilers! This was unutterable pomp. The mighty engines—but enough of this. I had never felt so fine before. And when I found that the regiment of natty servants respectfully "sir'd" me, my satisfaction was complete. When I returned to the pilot-house St. Louis was gone and I was lost. Here was a piece of river which was all down

in my book, but I could make neither head nor tail of it: you understand, it was turned around. I had seen it, when coming up-stream, but I had never faced about to see how it looked when it was behind me. My heart broke again, for it was plain that I had got to learn this troublesome river *both ways*.

The pilot-house was full of pilots, going down to "look at the river." What is called the "upper river" (the two hundred miles between St. Louis and Cairo, where the Ohio comes in) was low; and the Mississippi changes its channel so constantly that the pilots used to always find it necessary to run down to Cairo to take a fresh look, when their boats were to lie in port a week, that is, when the water was at a low stage. A deal of this "looking at the river" was done by poor fellows who seldom had a berth and whose only hope of getting one lay in their being always freshly posted and therefore ready to drop into the shoes of some reputable pilot, for a single trip, on account of such pilot's sudden illness, or some other necessity. And a good many of them constantly ran up and down inspecting the river, not because they ever really hoped to get a berth, but because (they being guests of the boat) it was cheaper to "look at the river" than stay ashore and pay board. In time these fellows grew dainty in their tastes, and only infested boats that had an established reputation for setting good tables. All visiting pilots were useful, for they were always ready and willing, winter or summer, night or day, to go out in the yawl and help buoy the channel or assist the boat's pilots in any way they could. They were likewise welcome because all pilots are tireless talkers, when gathered together, and as they talk only about the river they are always understood and are always interesting. Your true pilot cares nothing about anything on earth but the river, and his pride in his occupation surpasses the pride of kings.

We had a fine company of these river-inspectors along, this trip. There were eight or ten; and there was abundance of room for them in our great pilot-house. Two or three of them wore polished silk hats, elaborate shirt-fronts, diamond breastpins, kid gloves, and patent-leather boots. They were choice in their English, and bore themselves with a dignity proper to men of solid means and prodigious reputation as pilots. The others were more or less loosely clad, and wore upon their heads tall felt cones that were suggestive of the days of the Commonwealth.

I was a cipher in this august company, and felt subdued, not to say torpid. I was not even of sufficient consequence to assist at the wheel when it was necessary to put the tiller hard down in a hurry;

the guest that stood nearest did that when occasion required—and this was pretty much all the time, because of the crookedness of the channel and the scant water. I stood in a corner; and the talk I listened to took the hope all out of me. One visitor said to another:—

“Jim, how did you run Plum Point, coming up?”

“It was in the night, there, and I ran it the way one of the boys on the Diana told me; started out about fifty yards above the wood pile on the false point, and held on the cabin under Plum Point till I raised the reef—quarter less twain—then straightened up for the middle bar till I got well abreast the old one-limbed cotton-wood in the bend, then got my stern on the cotton-wood and head on the low place above the point, and came through a-booming—nine and a half.”

“Pretty square crossing, an’t it?”

“Yes, but the upper bar’s working down fast,”

Another pilot spoke up and said:—

“I had better water than that, and ran it lower down; started out from the false point—mark twain—raised the second reef abreast the big snag in the bend, and had quarter less twain.”

One of the gorgeous ones remarked: “I don’t want to find fault with your leadsmen, but that’s a good deal of water for Plum Point, it seems to me.”

There was an approving nod all around as this quiet snub dropped on the boaster and “settled” him. And so they went on talk-talk-talking. Meantime, the thing that was running in my mind was, “Now if my ears hear aright, I have not only to get the names of all the towns and islands and bends, and so on, by heart, but I must even get up a warm personal acquaintanceship with every old snag and one-limbed cotton-wood and obscure wood pile that ornaments the banks of this river for twelve hundred miles; and more than that, I must actually know where these things are in the dark, unless these guests are gifted with eyes that can pierce through two miles of solid blackness; I wish the piloting business was in Jericho and I had never thought of it.”

At dusk Mr. B— tapped the big bell three times (the signal to land), and the captain emerged from his drawing-room in the forward end of the texas, and looked up inquiringly. Mr. B— said:—

“We will lay up here all night, captain.”

“Very well, sir.”

That was all. The boat came to shore and was tied up for the night. It seemed to me a fine thing that the pilot could do as he pleased without asking so grand a captain’s permission. I took my

supper and went immediately to bed, discouraged by my day's observations and experiences. My late voyage's note-booking was but a confusion of meaningless names. It had tangled me all up in a knot every time I had looked at it in the daytime. I now hoped for respite in sleep; but no, it revelled all through my head till sunrise again, a frantic and tireless nightmare.

Next morning I felt pretty rusty and low-spirited. We went booming along, taking a good many chances, for we were anxious to "get out of the river" (as getting out to Cairo was called) before night should overtake us. But Mr. B—'s partner, the other pilot, presently grounded the boat, and we lost so much time getting her off that it was plain the darkness would overtake us a good long way above the mouth. This was a great misfortune especially to certain of our visiting pilots, whose boats would have to wait for their return, no matter how long that might be. It sobered the pilot-house talk a good deal. Coming up-stream, pilots did not mind low water or any kind of darkness; nothing stopped them but fog. But down-stream work was different; a boat was too nearly helpless, with a stiff current pushing behind her; so it was not customary to run down-stream at night in low water.

There seemed to be one small hope, however: if we could get through the intricate and dangerous Hat Island crossing before night, we could venture the rest, for we would have plainer sailing and better water. But it would be insanity to attempt Hat Island at night. So there was a deal of looking at watches all the rest of the day, and a constant ciphering upon the speed we were making; Hat Island was the eternal subject; sometimes hope was high and sometimes we were delayed in a bad crossing, and down it went again. For hours all hands lay under the burden of this suppressed excitement; it was even communicated to me, and I got to feeling so solicitous about Hat Island, and under such an awful pressure of responsibility, that I wished I might have five minutes on shore to draw a good, full, relieving breath, and start over again. We were standing no regular watches. Each of our pilots ran such portions of the river as he had run when coming up-stream, because of his greater familiarity with it; but both remained in the pilot-house constantly.

An hour before sunset, Mr. B— took the wheel and Mr. W— stepped aside. For the next thirty minutes every man held his watch in his hand and was restless, silent, and uneasy. At last somebody said, with a doomful sigh. "Well, yonder's Hat Island— and we can't make it."

All the watches closed with a snap, everybody sighed and muttered something about its being "too bad, too bad—ah, if we could *only* have got here half an hour sooner!" and the place was thick with the atmosphere of disappointment. Some started to go out, but loitered, hearing no bell-tap to land. The sun dipped behind the horizon, the boat went on. Inquiring looks passed from one guest to another; and one who had his hand on the door-knob, and had turned it, waited, then presently took away his hand and let the knob turn back again. We bore steadily down the bend. More looks were exchanged, and nods of surprised admiration—but no words. Insensibly the men drew together behind Mr. B—as the sky darkened and one or two dim stars came out. The dead silence and sense of waiting became oppressive. Mr. B— pulled the cord, and two deep, mellow notes from the big bell floated off on the night. Then a pause, and one more note was struck. The watchman's voice followed, from the hurricane deck:—

"Labboard lead, there! Stabboard lead!"

The cries of the leadsmen began to rise out of the distance, and were gruffly repeated by the word-passers on the hurricane deck.

"M-a-r-k- three! M-a-r-k three! Quarter-less-three! Half twain! quarter twain! M-a-r-k twain! Quarter-less"—

Mr. B— pulled two bell-ropes, and was answered by faint jinglings far below in the engine-room, and our speed slackened. The steam began to whistle through the gauge-cocks. The cries of the leadsmen went on—and it is a weird sound, always, in the night. Every pilot in the lot was watching, now, with fixed eyes, and talking under his breath. Nobody was calm and easy but Mr. B—. He would put his wheel down and stand on a spoke, and as the steamer swung into her (to me) utterly invisible marks—for we seemed to be in the midst of a wide and gloomy sea—he would meet and fasten her there. Talk was going on, now, in low voices:—

"There; she's over the first reef all right!"

After a pause, another subdued voice:—

"Her stern's coming down just *exactly* right, by *George!* Now she's in the marks; over she goes!"

Somebody else muttered:—

"Oh, it was done beautiful—*beautiful!*"

Now the engines were stopped altogether, and we drifted with the current. Not that I could see the boat drift, for I could not, the stars being all gone by this time. This drifting was the dismallest work; it held one's heart still. Presently I discovered a blacker gloom than that which surrounded us. It was the head of the

island. We were closing right down upon it. We entered its deeper shadow, and so imminent seemed the peril that I was likely to suffocate; and I had the strongest impulse to do *something*, anything, to save the vessel. But still Mr. B— stood by his wheel, silent, intent as a cat, and all the pilots stood shoulder to shoulder at his back.

“She’ll not make it!” somebody whispered.

The water grew shoaler and shoaler by the leadsmen’s cries, till it was down to—

“Eight-and-a-half! E-i-g-h-t feet! E-i-g-h-t feet! Seven-and”—

Mr. B— said warningly through his speaking tube to the engineer:—

“Stand by, now!”

“Aye-aye, sir.”

“Seven-and-a-half! Seven feet! *Six-and*”—

We touched bottom! Instantly Mr. B— set a lot of bells ringing, shouted through the tube, “*Now* let her have it—every ounce you’ve got!” then to his partner, “Put her hard down! snatch her! snatch her!” The boat rasped and ground her way through the sand, hung upon the apex of disaster a single tremendous instant, and then over she went! And such a shout as went up at Mr. B—’s back never loosened the roof of a pilot-house before!

There was no more trouble after that. Mr. B— was a hero that night; and it was some little time, too, before his exploit ceased to be talked about by river men.

Fully to realize the marvelous precision required in laying the great steamer in her marks in that murky waste of water, one should know that not only must she pick her intricate way through snags and blind reefs, and then shave the head of the island so closely as to brush the overhanging foliage with her stern, but at one place she must pass almost within arm’s reach of a sunken and invisible wreck that would snatch the hull timbers from under her if she should strike it, and destroy a quarter of a million dollars’ worth of steamboat and cargo in five minutes, and maybe a hundred and fifty human lives into the bargain.

The last remark I heard that night was a compliment to Mr. B—, uttered in soliloquy and with unction by one of our guests. He said:—

“By the Shadow of Death, but he’s a lightning pilot!”

“Old Times on the Mississippi,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1875

# Uncle Remus

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

## I. THE WONDERFUL TAR-BABY STORY

“Didn’t the fox *never* catch the rabbit, Uncle Remus?” asked the little boy the next evening.

“He come mighty nigh it, honey, sho’s you born—Brer Fox did. One day atter Brer Rabbit fool ’im wid dat calamus root, Brer Fox went ter wuk en got ’im some tar, en mix it wid some turkentime, en fix up a contrapshun wat he call a Tar-Baby, en he tuck dish yer Tar-Baby en he sot ’er in de big road, en den he lay off in de bushes fer to see wat de news wuz gwineter be. En he didn’t hatter wait long, nudder, kaze bimeby here come Brer Rabbit pacin’ down de road—lippity-clippity, clippity-lippity—des ez sassy ez a jay-bird. Brer Fox, he lay low. Brer Rabbit come prancin’ ’long twel he spy de Tar-Baby, en den he fotch up on his behime legs like he wuz ’stonished. De Tar-Baby, she sot dar, she did, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

“‘Mawnin’!’ sez Brer Rabbit, sezee—‘nice wedder dis mawnin’,’ sezee.

“Tar-Baby ain’t sayin’ nothin’, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

“‘How duz yo’ sym’tums seem ter segashuate?’ sez Brer Rabbit, sezee.

“Brer Fox, he wink his eye slow, en lay low, en de Tar-Baby, she ain’t sayin’ nothin’.

“‘How you come on, den? Is you deaf?’ sez Brer Rabbit, sezee. ‘Kaze if you is, I kin holler louder,’ sezee.

“Tar-Baby stay still, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

“‘Youer stuck up, dat’s w’at you is,’ says Brer Rabbit, sezee, ‘en I’m gwineter kyore you, dat’s w’at I’m a gwineter do,’ sezee.

“Brer Fox, he sorter chuckle in his stummuck, he did, but Tar-Baby ain’t sayin’ nothin’.

“‘I’m gwineter larn you how ter talk ter ’specttubble fokes ef hit’s de las’ ack,’ sez Brer Rabbit, sezee. ‘Ef you don’t take off dat hat en tell me howdy, I’m gwineter bus’ you wide open,’ sezee.

“Tar-Baby stay still, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

“Brer Rabbit keep on axin’ ’im, en de Tar-Baby, she keep on sayin’ nothin’, ’twel present’y Brer Rabbit draw back wid his fis’,

he did, en blip he tuck 'er side er de head. His fis' stuck, en he can't pull loose. De tar hilt 'im. But Tar-Baby, she stay still, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

"'Ef you don't lemme loose, I'll knock you agin,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, en wid dat he fotch 'er a wipe wid de udder han', en dat stuck. Tar-Baby, she ain't sayin' nothin', en Brer Fox, he lay low.

"'Tu'n me loose, fo' I kick de natal stuffin' outen you,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, but de Tar-Baby, she ain't sayin' nothin'. She des hilt on, en den Brer Rabbit lose de use er his feet in de same way. Brer Fox, he lay low. Den Brer Rabbit squall out dat ef de Tar-Baby don't tu'n 'im loose he butt 'er cranksided. En den he butted, en his head got stuck. Den Brer Fox, he sa'ntered fort', lookin' des ez innercent ez one er yo' mammy's mockin'-birds.

"'Howdy, Brer Rabbit,' sez Brer Fox, sezee. 'You look sorter stuck up dis mawnin',' sezee, en den he rolled on de groun', en laughed en laughed twel he couldn't laugh no mo'. 'I speck you'll take dinner wid me dis time, Brer Rabbit. I done laid in some calamus root, en I ain't gwineter take no skuse', sez Brer Fox, sezee."

Here Uncle Remus paused, and drew a two-pound yam out of the ashes.

"Did the fox eat the rabbit?" asked the little boy to whom the story had been told.

"Dat's all de fur de tale goes," replied the old man. "He mout, en den agin he moutent. Some say Jedge B'ar come 'long en loosed 'im—some say he didn't. I hear Miss Sally callin'. You better run 'long."

## II. HOW MR. RABBIT WAS TOO SHARP FOR MR. FOX

"Uncle Remus," said the little boy one evening, when he found the old man with little or nothing to do, "did the fox kill and eat the rabbit when he caught him with the Tar-Baby?"

"Law, honey, ain't I tell you 'bout dat?" replied the old darkey, chuckling slyly. "I 'clar ter grashus I ought er tole you dat, but old man Nod wuz ridin' on my eyeleds 'twel a leetle mo'n I'd a dis'member'd my own name, en den on to dat here come yo' mammy hollerin' atter you.

"W'at I tell you w'en I fus' begin? I tole you Brer Rabbit wuz a monstus soon creetur; leas' ways dat's w'at I laid out fer ter tell you. Well, den, honey, don't you go en make no udder calkalashuns, kaze in dem days Brer Rabbit en his fambly wuz

at de head er de gang w'en enny racket wuz on han', en dar dey stayed. 'Fo' you begins ter wipe yo' eyes 'bout Brer Rabbit, you wait en see whar'bouts Brer Rabbit gwineter fetch up at. But dat's needer yer ner dar.

"W'en Brer Fox fine Brer Rabbit mixt up wid de Tar-Baby, he feel mighty good, en he roll on de groun' en laff. Bimeby he up'n say, sezee:

"Well, I speck I got you dis time, Brer Rabbit, sezee; 'maybe I ain't, but I speck I is. You been runnin' roun' here sassin' atter me a mighty long time, but I speck you done come ter de een' er de row. You bin cuttin' up yo' capers en bouncin' 'roun' in dis neighborhood ontwel you come ter b'leeve yo'se'f de boss er de whole gang. En den youer allers some'rs whar you got no bizness,' sez Brer Fox, sezee. 'Who ax you fer ter come en strike up a 'quaintance wid dish yer Tar-Baby? En who stuck you up dar what you iz? Nobody in de roun' worril. You des tuck en jam yo'se'f on dat Tar-Baby widout waitin' fer enny invite,' sez Brer Fox, sezee, 'en dar you is, en dar you'll stay twel I fixes up a bresh-pile and fires her up, kaze I'm gwineter bobbycue you dis day, sho,' sez Brer Fox, sezee.

"Den Brer Rabbit talk mighty 'umble.

"I don't keer w'at you do wid me, Brer Fox,' sezee, 'so you don't fling me in dat brier-patch. Roas' me, Brer Fox,' sezee, 'but don't fling me in dat brier-patch,' sezee.

"Het's so much trouble fer ter kindle a fier,' sez Brer Fox, sezee, 'dat I speck I'll hatter hang you,' sezee.

"Hang me des ez high as you please, Brer Fox,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, 'but do fer de Lord's sake don't fling me in dat brier-patch,' sezee.

"I ain't got no string,' sez Brer Fox, sezee, 'en now I speck I'll hatter drown you,' sezee.

"Drown me des ez déep ez you please, Brer Fox,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, 'but do don't fling me in dat brier-patch,' sezee.

"Dey ain't no water nigh,' sez Brer Fox, sezee, 'en now I speck I'll hatter skin you,' sezee.

"Skin me, Brer Fox,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, 'snatch out my eyeballs, t'ar out my years by de roots, en cut off my legs,' sezee, 'but do please, Brer Fox, don't fling me in dat brier-patch,' sezee.

"Co'se Brer Fox wanter hurt Brer Rabbit bad ez he kin, so he cotch 'im by de behime legs en slung 'im right in de middle er de brier-patch. Dar wuz a considerbul flutter whar Brer Rabbit struck de bushes, en Brer Fox sorter hang 'round' fer ter see w'at

wuz gwinter happen. Bimeby he hear somebody call 'im, en way up de hill he see Brer Rabbit settin' cross-legged on a chinkapin log koamin' de pitch outen his har wid a chip. Den Brer Fox know dat he bin swop off mighty bad. Brer Rabbit wuz bleedzed fer ter fling back some er his sass, en he holler out:

“‘Bred en bawn in a brier-patch, Brer Fox—bred en bawn in a brier-patch!’ en wid dat he skip out des ez lively ez a cricket in de embers.”

*Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*, 1880

# Negro Songs

## 1. Mary Wore Three Links of Chain

Mary wore three links of chain,  
Mary wore three links of chain,  
Mary wore three links of chain,  
Ev'ry link bearin' Jesus' name;  
All my sins been taken away, taken away.

Mary weeped and Martha mourned,  
Mary weeped and Martha mourned,  
Mary weeped and Martha mourned,  
Gabriel stood and blowed his horn;  
All my sins been taken away, taken away.

I don't know but I've been told,  
I don't know but I've been told,  
I don't know but I've been told,  
The streets in heaven are paved with gold;  
All my sins been taken away, taken away.

Can't you hear dem horses' feet?  
Can't you hear dem horses' feet?  
Can't you hear dem horses' feet  
Slippin' and slidin' on de golden street?  
All my sins been taken away, taken away.

My feet got wet in de midnight dew,  
My feet got wet in de midnight dew,  
My feet got wet in de midnight dew,  
An' de mornin' star was a witness too;  
All my sins been taken away, taken away.

I'm go'n home on de mornin' train,  
I'm go'n home on de mornin' train,  
I'm go'n home on de mornin' train,  
All don't see me go'n to hear me sing:  
All my sins been taken away, taken away.

*The American Songbag, 1927*

## 2. Revival Hymn

Oh, whar shill we go w'en de great day comes,  
Wid de blowin' er de trumpits en de bangin' er de drums?  
How many po' sinners'll be kotched out late  
En fine no latch ter de golden gate?  
No use fer ter wait twel ter-morrer!  
De sun musn't set on yo' sorrer,  
Sin's ez sharp ez a bamboo-brier—  
Oh, Lord! fetch de mo'ners up higher!

W'en de nashuns er de earf is a stan'in all aroun',  
Who's a gwineter be chosen fer ter w'ar de glory-crown?  
Who's a gwine fer ter stan' stiff-kneed en bol'.  
En answer to der name at de callin' er de roll?  
You better come now ef you comin'—  
Ole Satun is loose en a bummin'—  
De wheels er distruckshun is a hummin'—  
Oh, come 'long, sinner, ef you comin'!

De song er salvashun is a mighty sweet song,  
En de Pairidise win' blow fur en blow strong,  
En Aberham's bosom, hit's saft en hit's wide,  
En right dar's de place whar de sinners oughter hidel  
Oh, you nee'nter be a stoppin' en a lookin';  
Ef you fool wid ole Satun you'll git took in;  
You'll hang on de aidge en get shook in,  
Ef you keep on a stoppin' en a lookin'.

De time is right now, en dish yer's de place—  
Let de sun er salvashun shine squar' in yo' face;  
Fight de battles er de Lord, fight soon en fight late,  
En you'll allers fine a latch ter de golden gate.  
No use fer ter wait twel ter-morrer,  
De sun musn't set on yo' sorrer—  
Sin's ez sharp ez a bamboo-brier,  
Ax de Lord fer ter fetch you up higher!

Joel Chandler Harris, *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*, 1880

### 3. Boll Weevil Song

O, de boll weevil am a little black bug,  
Come from Mexico, dey say,  
Come all de way to Texas, jus' a-lookin' foh  
a place to stay,  
Jus' a-lookin' foh a home, jus' a-lookin'  
foh a home.

De first time I seen de boll weevil,  
He was a-settin' on de square.  
De next time I seen de boll weevil, he had  
all of his family dere.  
Jus' a-lookin' foh a home, jus' a-lookin'  
for a home.

De farmer say to de weevil:  
"What make yo' head so red?"  
De weevil say to de farmer, "It's a wondah  
I ain't dead,  
A-lookin' foh a home, jus' a-lookin' foh  
a home."

De farmer take de boll weevil,  
An' he put him in de hot san'.  
De weevil say: "Dis is mighty hot, but I'll  
stan' it like a man,  
Dis'll be my home, it'll be my home."

De farmer take de boll weevil,  
An' he put him in a lump of ice;  
De weevil say to de farmer: "Dis is mighty  
cool and nice,  
It'll be my home, dis'll be my home."

De farmer take de boll weevil,  
An' he put him in de fire.  
De weevil say to de farmer: "Here I are,  
here I are,  
Dis'll be my home, dis'll be my home."

De boll weevil say to de farmer:  
"You better leave me alone;  
I done eat all yo' cotton, now I'm goin' to  
start on yo' corn,  
I'll have a home, I'll have a home."

De merchant got half de cotton,  
De boll weevil got de res'.  
Didn't leave de farmer's wife but one old  
cotton dress,  
An' it's full of holes, it's full of holes.

De farmer say to de merchant:  
"We's in an awful fix;  
De boll weevil et all de cotton up an' lef' us  
only sticks,  
We's got no home, we's got no home."

De farmer say to de merchant:  
"We ain't made but only one bale,  
And befoh we'll give yo' dat one we'll fight  
and go to jail,  
We'll have a home, we'll have a home."

De cap'n say to de missus:  
"What d' you t'ink o' dat?  
De boll weevil done make a nes' in my bes'  
Sunday hat,  
Goin' to have a home, goin' to have a  
home."

An' if anybody should ax you,  
Who it was dat make dis song,  
Jus' tell 'em 'twas a big buck niggah wid a  
paih o' blue duckin's on,  
Ain' got no home, ain' got no home.

*The American Songbag, 1927*

#### 4. Coon Can (Poor Boy)

My mother called me to her deathbed side, these words she said  
to me:  
"If you don't mend your rovin' ways, they'll put you in the  
penitentiary,  
They'll put you in the penitentiary, poor boy, they'll put you in  
the penitentiary,  
If you don't mend your rovin' ways, they'll put you in the  
penitentiary."

I sat me down to play coon can, could scarcely read my hand,  
A thinkin' about the woman I loved, ran away with another man.  
Ran away with another man, poor boy, ran away with another man.  
I was thinkin' about the woman I loved, ran away with another  
man.

I'm a standin' on the corner, in front of a jewelry store,  
Big policeman taps me on the back, says, "You ain't a goin' to  
kill no more."

Says, "You ain't a goin' to kill no more, poor boy," says, "You  
ain't a goin' to kill no more."

Big policeman taps me on the back, says, "You ain't a goin' to  
kill no more."

"Oh, cruel, kind judge, oh, cruel, kind judge, what are you goin'  
to do with me?"

"If that jury finds you guilty, poor boy, I'm goin' to send you  
to the penitentiary.

I'm goin' to send you to the penitentiary, poor boy, goin' to send  
you to the penitentiary.

If that jury finds you guilty, poor boy, I'm goin' to send you  
to the penitentiary."

Well, the jury found him guilty, the clerk he wrote it down,  
The judge pronounced his sentence, poor boy; ten long years in  
Huntsville town.

Ten long years in Huntsville town, poor boy, ten long years in  
Huntsville town;

The judge pronounced his sentence, poor boy, ten long years  
in Huntsville town.

The iron gate clanged behind him, he heard the warden say,  
"Ten long years for you in prison, poor boy, yes, it's ten long  
years for you this day.

Ten long years for you in prison, poor boy, yes, it's ten long years  
this day."

As the iron gate clanged behind him, that's what he heard the  
warden say.

*The American Songbag, 1927*

# The Quare Women

LUCY FURMAN

Aunt Ailsie first heard the news from her son's wife, Ruthena, who, returning from a trading trip to The Forks, reined in her nag to call,—

"Maw, there's a passel of quare women come in from furrin parts and sot 'em up some cloth houses there on the p'int above the courthouse, and carrying on some of the outlandishest doings ever you heard of. And folks a-pouring up that hill till no jury can't hardly be got to hold court this week."

The thread of wool Aunt Ailsie was spinning snapped and flew, and she stepped down from porch to palings. "Hit's a show!" she exclaimed, in an awed voice. "I heard of one down Jackson-way one time, where there was a elephant and a lion and all manner of varmints, and the women rid around bareback, without no clothes on 'em to speak of."

"No, hit hain't no show, neither, folks claim; they allow them women is right women, and dresses theirselves plumb proper. Some says they come up from the level land. And some that Uncle Ephraim Kent fotched 'em in."

"Did n't you never go up to see?"

Ruthena laughed. "I'll bound I would if I'd a-been you," she said; "and but for that sucking child at home, I allow I would myself."

"Child or no child, you ought to have went," complained Aunt Ailsie, disappointed. "I wisht Lot would come on back and tell me about 'em."

Next morning she was delighted to see her favorite grandson, Fult Fallon, dash up the branch on his black mare.

"Tell about them quare women," she demanded, before he could dismount.

"I come to get some of your sweet apples for 'em, granny," he said. "'Peared like they was apple-hungry, and I knowed hit was time for yourn."

"Light and take all you need," she said. "But, Fulty, stop a spell first and tell me more about them women. Air they running a show like we heard of down Jackson-way four or five year gone?"

Fult shook his head emphatically. "Not that kind," he said.

"Them women are the ladyest women you ever seed, and the friendliest. And hit's a pure sight, all the pretties they got, and all the things that goes on. I never in life enjoyed the like."

Aunt Ailsie followed him around to the sweet-apple tree, and helped him fill his saddlebags.

"Keep a-telling about 'em," she begged. "Seems like I hain't heard or seed nothing for so long I'm nigh starved to death."

"Well, they come up from the level country—the Blue Grass. You ricollect me telling you how I passed through hit on my way to Frankfort—as smooth, pretty country as ever was made; though, being level, hit looked lonesome to me. And from what they have said, I allow Uncle Ephraim Kent fotched 'em up here, some way or 'nother, I don't rightly know how. And they put up at our house till me 'n' the boys could lay floors and set up their tents."

The saddlebags were full now, and they turned back.

"Stay and set with me a while," she begged him.

"Could n't noways think of hit," he said; "might miss my sewing-lesson."

"Sewing-lesson!" she exclaimed.

"Had n't you heard about me becoming a man of peace, setting down sewing handkerchers and sech every morning?" he laughed.

"Now I know you are lying to me," she said, in an injured tone.

"Nary grain," he protested. "Come get up behind and go in along and see if I hain't speaking the pure truth!"

"I would, too, if there was anybody to stay with the place and the property," she replied. "'Pears like your grandpaw will set on that grand jury tell doomsday! How many indictments have they drawed up again' you this time, Fulty?" she asked, anxiously.

Fult threw back his handsome dark head, and laughed again as he sprang into the saddle. "Not more 'n 'leven or twelve!" he said. "They're about wound up, now, I allow, and grandpaw will likely be in by sundown. You ride in to-morrow to see them women!"

It was past sundown, however, when Uncle Lot rode up, grave and silent as usual. Aunt Ailsie hardly waited for him to hang his saddle on the porch-peg before inquiring,—

"What about them quare women on the p'int?"

Uncle Lot frowned. "What should I know about quare women?" he demanded. "Hain't I a God-fearing man and a Old Primitive?"

"But setting on the grand jury all week, right there under the p'int, you must have seed 'em, 'pears like?"

"I did *see* 'em," he admitted, disapprovingly. "Uncle Ephraim

Kent, he come in whilst we was a-starting up court a-Monday morning, and says, 'Citizens, the best thing that ever come up Troublesome is a-coming in now!' And the jedge he journeyed court, and all hands went out to see. And here was four wagons, one with a passel of women, three loaded with all manner of plunder."

"What did they look like?"

"Well enough—*too* good to be a-traipsing over the land by themselves this way." He shook his head. "And as for their doings, hit's a sight to hear the singing and merriment that goes on up thar on that hill when the wind is right. Folks has wore a slick trail, traveling up and down. But not *me!* Solomon says, 'Bewar' of the strange woman'; and I hain't the man to shun his counsel."

"I allow they are right women—I allow you wouldn't have tuck no harm," soothed Aunt Ailsie.

"Little you know, Ailsie, little you know. If you had sot on as many grand juries as me, you would n't allow nothing about no woman, not even them you had knowed all your life, let alone quare, fatched-on ones that blows in from God knows whar, and darrs their Maker with naught but a piece of factory betwixt them and the elements!"

Aunt Ailsie dropped the subject. "What about Fulty?" she asked, in a troubled voice.

"There was several indictments again' him and his crowd this time—three for shooting on the highway, two for shooting up the town, two for breaking up meetings—same old story."

"And you helped again to indict him?" remarked Aunt Ailsie, somewhat bitterly.

"I did, too," he asserted, in some anger, "and will every time he needs hit."

"Seems like a man ought to have a leetle mercy on his own blood."

He held up a stern forefinger. "Let me hear no more sech talk," he commanded; "I am a man of jestic, and I aim to deal hit out fa'r and squar', let hit fall whar hit may."

Next morning, which was Saturday, Aunt Ailsie mildly suggested at breakfast: "I might maybe ride in to town to-day, if you say so. I can't weave no funder till I get some thread, and there's a good mess of eggs, and several beans and sweet apples, to trade."

Uncle Lot fixed severe eyes upon her. "Ailsie," he said, "you would n't have no call to ride in to The Forks to-day if them quare women was n't thar. You allus was possessed to run atter some

new thing. My counsel to you is the same as Solomon's—'Bewar' of the strange woman!'"

However, he did not absolutely forbid her to go; and she said gently, as he started up to the cornfield a little later, hoe in hand:—

"If I do ride in, you'll find beans and 'taters in the pot, and coffee and a good pone of cornbread on the hairth, and the table all sot."

Two hours later, clothed in the hot brown-linsey dress, black sunbonnet, new print apron, and blue-yarn mitts, which she wore on funeral occasions and like social events, she set forth on old Darb, the fat, flea-bitten nag, with a large poke of beans across her side-saddle, and baskets of eggs and apples on her arms.

The half-mile down her branch and the two miles up Troublesome Creek had never seemed so long, and the beauty of green folding mountains and tall trees mirrored in winding waters was thrown away on her.

"I am plumb wore out looking at nothing but clifts and hillsides and creek-beds for sixty year," she said aloud, resentfully. "'Pears like I would give life hitself to see something different."

She switched the old nag sharply, and could hardly wait for the first glimpse of the "cloth houses."

They came in sight at last—a cluster of white tents, one above another, near the top of a spur overlooking the courthouse and village. Drawing nearer, she could see people moving up the zigzag path toward them. Leaving the beans across her saddle, she did not even stop at the hotel to see her daughter, Cynthia Fallon, but, flinging her bridle over a paling, went up the hill at a good gait, baskets on arms, and entered the lowest tent with a heart beating more rapidly from excitement than from the steep climb.

The sides of this tent were rolled up. A group of ten or twelve girls stood at one end of a long white table, where a strange and very pretty young woman, in a crisp gingham dress and large white apron, was kneading a batch of light-bread dough, and explaining the process of bread-making as she worked. Men, women, and children, two or three deep, in a compact ring, looked on. Gently pushing her way so that she could see better, Aunt Ailsie was a little shocked to find that the man who gave way at her touch was none other than Darcy Kent, the young sheriff, and Fult's arch-enemy.

After the dough was moulded into loaves and placed in the oven of a shining new cook-stove, most of the crowd moved on to the next tent, which was merely a roof of canvas stretched between

tall trees. Beneath was another table, and this was being carefully set by two girls, one of whom was Charlotta Fallon, Aunt Ailsie's granddaughter.

"The women teached me the pine-blank right way to set a table," she said importantly to her granny, "and now hit's aiming to be sot that way every time."

The smooth white cloth was laid just so; the knives, forks, spoons, and white enameled cups and plates were placed in the proper spots; even the camp-stools observed a correct spacing. There were small folded squares of linen at each plate.

"What air them handkerchers for, Charlotty?" inquired Aunt Ailsie, under her breath.

"Them's napkins, granny," replied Charlotta in a lofty tone.

"And what's that for?" indicating the glass of flowers in the centre of the table. "Them women don't eat posies, do they?"

"Hit's for looks," answered Charlotta. "Them women allows things eats better if they look good. I allus gather a flower-pot every morning and fotch up to 'em."

Soon Aunt Ailsie and the crowd went up farther, to a wider "bench," or shelf, where the largest tent stood. Within were numerous young men and maidens, large boys and girls, sitting about on floor or camp-stools, talking and laughing, and every one of them engaged upon a piece of sewing. Another strange young woman, in another crisp dress, moved smilingly about, directing the work.

But Aunt Ailsie's eyes were instantly drawn to the tent itself, the roof of which was festooned with red cheesecloth and many-colored paper chains, a great flag being draped at one end, while every remaining foot of roof-space and wall-space was covered with bright pictures. Pushing back her black sunbonnet, she moved around the tent sides, gazing rapturously.

"'Pears like I never seed my fill of pretties before," she said aloud to herself again and again.

"You like it then, do you?" asked a soft voice behind her. And, turning, she confronted still another strange young woman, standing by some shelves filled with books.

"Like hit!" repeated Aunt Ailsie, with shining eyes, "Woman, hit's what my soul has pined for these sixty year—jest to see things that are pretty and bright!"

"You must spend the day with us, and have dinner, and get acquainted," smiled the stranger.

"I will, too—hit's what I come for. Rutheny she told me a Thurs-

day of you fotched-on women a-being here; and then Fulty he give some account of you, too—”

“You are not Fult’s granny, he talks so much about?”

“I am, too—Ailsie Pridemore, his maw’s maw, that holp to raise him, and that loves him better than anybody. How many of you furrin women is there?”

“Five—but we’re not foreign.”

“Why not? Did n’t you come up from the level land?”

“Yes, from the Blue Grass. But that’s part of the same state, and we’re all from the same stock, and really kin, you know.”

“No, I never heared of having no kin down in the level country.”

“Yes, our forefathers came out together in the early days. Some stopped in the mountains, some went farther into the wilderness—that’s all the difference.”

“Well, hain’t that a sight now! I’m proud to hear hit, though, and to have sech sprightly looking gals for kin. Did you ride on the railroad train to get here?”

“Yes, one day by train, and a little over two days by wagon.”

Aunt Ailsie sighed deeply. “’Pears like I’d give life hitself to see a railroad train!” she said. “I hain’t never been nowhere nor seed nothing. Ten mile is the furdest ever I got from home.”

“Well, it’s not too late—you must travel yet.”

“Not me, woman,” declared Aunt Ailsie. “My man is again’ women-folks a-going anywheres; he allows they’ll be on the traipse allus, if ever they take a start. What might your name be?”

“Virginia Preston.”

“And how old air you, Virginny?”

“How old would you guess?”

“Well, I would say maybe eighteen or nineteen.”

“I’m twenty-eight,” replied Virginia.

“Now you know you hain’t! No old woman could n’t have sech rosy jaws and tender skin!”

“Yes, I am; but I don’t call it old.”

“Hit’s old, too; when I were twenty-eight, I were very nigh a grandmaw.”

“You must have married very young.”

“No, I were fourteen. That hain’t young—my maw, she married at twelve, and had sixteen in family. I never had but a small mess of young-uns,—eight,—and they’re all married and gone, or else dead, now, and me and Lot left alone. Where’s your man while you traveling the country this way?”

“I have no man—I’m not married.”

"What?" demanded Aunt Ailsie, as if she could not have heard aright.

"I have no husband—I am not married," repeated the stranger.

Aunt Ailsie stared, dumb, for some seconds before she could speak. "Twenty-eight, and hain't got a man!" she then exclaimed. She looked Virginia all over again, as if from a new point of view, and with a gaze in which curiosity and pity were blended. "I never in life seed but one old maid before, and she was fittified," she remarked tentatively.

"Well, at least I don't have fits," laughed Virginia.

Lost in puzzled thought, Aunt Ailsie turned to the books. "What did you fotch them up here for?" she asked.

"For people to read and enjoy."

"They won't do me no good,"—with a sigh,—“nor nobody else much. I hain't got nary grain of larning, and none of the women-folks hain't got none to speak of. But a few of the men-folks they can read: my man, he can,”—with pride,—“and maybe some of the young-uns.”

A collection of beautifully colored sea-shells next claimed her attention; and then Virginia adjusted a stereopticon before her eyes, and for a long time she was lost in wonderful sights. At last, when she was again conscious of her surroundings, her eyes fell upon Fult's dark head near-by, close to Aletha Lee's fair one, both bent over pieces of sewing, while Lethie's baby brother, her constant charge, played on the floor between them.

"If there hain't my Fulty, jest like he said," she exclaimed joyfully. "And I made sure he was lying to me. Hit shore is a sight for sore eyes, to see him with sech a harmless weepion in hand! Does he behave hisself that civil all the time?"

"Yes, indeed—always."

A sudden cloud fell upon Aunt Ailsie's face. "As I come up," she said, "I seed Darcy Kent there in the cook's house. Hit would n't never do for him and Fulty to meet here on the hill. They hain't hardly met for two year without gun-play."

"Oh, I'm sure they'd never do such things in our presence!"

"Don't you be too sure, woman," admonished Aunt Ailsie. "There is sech feeling betwixt them boys, they hain't liable to stop for nothing. For twenty-five year their paws fit,—the war betwixt Fallons and Kents has gone on nigh thirty year now,—and they hate each other worse 'n pizen. I raised Fulty myself, mostly, hoping he never would foller in the footsteps of Fighting Fult, his paw. And he never, neither, till Fighting Fult was kilt by Rafe Kent,

Darcy's paw, four year gone. Then, of course, hit was laid on him, you might say, to revenge his paw,—being the first born, and the rest mostly gals,—and the day he were eighteen he rid right out in the open and shot Rafe in the heart—the Fallons never did foller laywaying. And of course the jury felt for him and give him jest a light sentence—five year. And then the Governor pardoned him out atter one year. And then he fit in Cuby nigh a year. Then, when he come back home, hit wa'n't no time till him and Darcy was a-warring nigh as bad as their paws had been; and for two year we hain't seed naught but trouble, and I have looked every day for Fulty to be fotched in dead."

"Yes, Uncle Ephraim told us about the feud between them. It is very sad, when both are such fine young men."

There was a stir among the young folks, who rose, put away their work, and gathered at one end of the tent, under the big flag. Then the strange woman who had taught them sewing sat down before a small box and began to play a tune.

"Is there music in that-air cupboard?" asked Aunt Ailsie, astonished.

"It is a baby-organ we brought with us," explained Virginia.

"And who's that a-picking on hit?"

"Amy Scott, my best friend."

"How old is she?"

"About my age."

"She's got a man, sure, hain't she?"

"No."

"What—as fair a woman as her—and with that friendly smile?"

"No."

The anxious, puzzled look again fell upon Aunt Ailsie's face.

Then a song was started up, in which all the young folks joined with a will. It was a new kind of singing to Aunt Ailsie,—rousing and tuneful,—very different from the long-drawn hymns, or the droning ancient ballads, she had loved in her young days.

"They are getting ready for our Fourth of July picnic next Wednesday," said Virginia.

"I follered singing when I were young," Aunt Ailsie said after a period of delighted listening. "I could ver; nigh sing the night through on song-ballats."

"That's where Fult must have learned the ones he sings so well," cried Virginia. "You must sing some for us, this very day."

Aunt Ailsie raised her hands. "Me sing!" she said; "woman, hit would be as much as my life is worth to sing a song-ballat now;

I hain't dared to raise nothing but hime-tunes sence Lot j'ined."

"Since when?"

"Sence my man, Lot, got religion and j'ined. He allows now that song-ballats is jest devil's ditties, and won't have one raised under his roof. When Fulty he wants me to larn him a new one, we have to go clean up to the top of the ridge and a little grain on yan side, before I dairst lift my voice."

A little later Aunt Ailsie was taken by her new friend to see the two bedroom tents, with their white cots and goods-box wash-stands; and then to the top of the spur, where, in an almost level space under the trees, a large ring of tiny children circled and sang around another strange young woman.

"The least ones!" exclaimed Aunt Ailsie. "What a love-lie sight! I never heard of larning sech as them nothing before. And if there hain't Cynthy's leetle John Wes, God bless hit!" as a dark-eyed, impish-looking four-year-old went capering by. "Hit were borned the very day hit's paw got kilt—jest atter Cynthy got the news. I tell you, Virginny, hit were a sorry time for her—left a widow-woman with seven young-uns, mostly gals."

"Little John Wes is very bright and attractive."

"Hit is that—and friendly, too; hit never sees a stranger!"

"He gives us a good deal of trouble, though, with his smoking and chewing."

"Yes, hit's pyeert every way; I hain't seed hit for a year or two without a chaw in hit's jaw. And liquor! Hit's a sight the way that young-un can drink. Fulty and t'other boys they jest load him up, to see the quare things he'll do."

At this moment the little kindergartners were dismissed, and marched, as decorously as they were able, down the hill after their teacher, followed by all the onlookers. The tents were discharging their crowds, too, and Aunt Ailsie recognized several more of her grandchildren on the way down.

Arrived at the lowest tent, Aunt Ailsie presented her baskets of apples and eggs to the women. A dozen or more elderly folk, and as many young girls who were deeply interested in learning "furrin" cooking, remained to dinner. The rest of the strange women, Amy, the kindergartner, the cooking teacher and the nurse, Aunt Ailsie now met, putting to each the inevitable questions as to name, age, and condition of life. As each smilingly replied that she had no man, a cloud of real distress gathered on Aunt Ailsie's brow, which not all the novel accompaniments of the meal could entirely banish.

Afterward, when the dishes were washed and all sat around in

groups under the trees, resting, she said confidentially to Virginia:—

“I am plumb tore up in my mind over you women, five of you, and as good-lookers as ever I beheld, and with sech nice, common ways, too, not having no man. Hit hain’t no ways reasonable. Maybe the men in your country does a sight of fighting, like ourn, and has been mostly kilt off?”

“No, we have no feuds or fighting down there—there are plenty of men.”

“Well, what’s wrong with ’em, then? Hain’t they got no feelings—to let sech a passel of gals get past ’em? That-air cook, now,—her you call Annetty, with the blue eyes and crow’s-wing hair, and not but twenty-three; now what do you think about men-folks that would let her live single?”

“Maybe they can’t help themselves,” laughed Virginia; “maybe she does n’t want to marry.”

“Not want to marry? Everybody does, don’t they?”

“Did you?”

“I did, too. My Lot was as pretty a boy as ever rid down a creek—jest pine-blank like Fulty.”

“And you’ve never been sorry for it?”

“Nary a day.” Then she caught her breath, leaned forward, and spoke in Virginia’s ear: “Nary a day till he j’ined! I allus was gayly-like and loved to sing song-ballats, and get about, and sech; and my ways don’t pleasure him none sence then, and hit’s hard to ricollect and not rile him. But, woman, while I’ve got the chanct, I want to ax you one more thing, for I know hit’s the first question my man will put when I get home. How come you furrin women to come in here, and what are you aiming to do?”

“We came because Uncle Ephraim Kent asked us,” was the reply. “A lot of women from down in the state—the State Federation of Women’s Clubs—sent us up to Perry County last summer, to see what needed to be done for the young people of the mountains. And one day, while we were there, Uncle Ephraim walked over and made us promise to come to the Forks of Troublesome if we ever returned. And we are here to learn all we can, and teach all we can, and make friends, and give the young folks something pleasant to do and to think about. But here comes Uncle Ephraim up the hill: he’ll tell you more about it.”

An impressive figure was approaching—that of a tall, thin old man, with smooth face, fine dark eyes, and a mane of white hair, uncovered by a hat, wearing a crimson-linsey hunting-jacket, linen homespun trousers, and moccasins, and carrying a long staff. Amy,

who had joined him, brought him over to the bench where Virginia and Aunt Ailsie were sitting.

"Well, how-dye, Uncle Ephraim, how do you find yourself?" was Aunt Ailsie's greeting.

"Fine, Ailsie—better, body and sperrit, than ever I looked to be."

"I allow you done a good deed when you fotched these furrin women in."

"I did, too, the best I ever done," he said, with conviction. Sitting down, he looked out over the valley of Troublesome, the village below, and the opposite steep slopes. "You know how things has allus been with us, Ailsie, shut off in these rugged hills for uppards of a hundred year, scarce knowing there was a world outside, with nobody going out or coming in, and no chance ever for the young-uns to get larning or manners. When I were jest a leetle chunk of a shirt-tail boy, hoeing corn on yon hillsides,"—pointing to the opposite mountain,—"I would look up Troublesome, and down Troublesome, and wonder if anybody would ever come in to larn us anything. And as I got older, I follered praying for somebody to come. I growed up; nobody come. My offsprings, to grands and greats, growed up; still nobody come. And times a-getting wusser every day, with all the drinking and shooting and wars and killings—as well you know, Ailsie."

"I do, too," sighed Aunt Ailsie.

"Then last summer, about the time the crap was laid by, I heared how some strange women had come in and sot up tents over in Perry, and was a-doing all manner of things for young-uns. And one day I tuck my foot in my hand,—though I be eighty-two, twenty mile still hain't no walk for me,—and went acrost to see 'em. Two days I sot and watched them and their doings. Then I said to 'em, 'Women, my prayers is answered. You air the ones I have looked for for seventy year—the ones sont in to help us. Come next summer to the Forks of Troublesome and do what the spirit moves you for my grands and greats and t'other young-uns that needs hit.' And here they be, doing not only for the young, but for every age. And there hain't been a gun shot off in town sence the first night they come in. And all hands is a-larning civility and God-fearingness."

"Yes, and Fulty and his crowd sets up here and sews every morning."

"And that hain't all. I allow you won't hardly believe your years, when I tell you that I'm a-getting me larning." He drew a new primer from his pocket, and held it out to her with pride. "Al-

ready, in three lessons, Amy here has teached me my letters, and I am beginning to spell. And I will die a larned man yet, able to read in my grandsir's old Bible!"

Aunt Ailsie was speechless a moment before replying, "I'm proud for you, Uncle Ephraim—I shore am glad. I wisht hit was me!"

But already the young people were trooping blithely up the hill and past the dining-tent. For, from two to three was "play-time" on the hill, and every young creature from miles around came to it. Fult went by with his pretty sweetheart, Lethie, whose two-year old baby brother he carried on his arm. For Lethie, though but seventeen, had had to be mother to her father's five younger children for two years, and would never let little Madison out of her sight.

The older folks followed to the top of the spur, and Virginia told a hero-story, and the nurse gave a five-minute talk; and then the play-games began, all taking partners and forming a large ring, and afterward going through many pretty figures, singing as they played, Fult's rich voice in the lead. Aunt Ailsie had played all the games when she was young; her ancestors had played them on village greens in Old England for centuries. Her eyes shone as she watched the flying feet and happy faces.

They were in the very midst of a play-game and song called "Old Betty Larkin," when the singing suddenly broke off, and everybody stood stock still in their tracks. The cooking-teacher—the young woman with the blue eyes and crow's-wing hair—was stepping into the circle, and with her was Darcy Kent.

All eyes were riveted upon Fult. He stiffened for a bare instant, a deep flush overspread his face as his eyes met Darcy's; then, with scarcely a break, he took up the song again and deliberately turned and swung his partner, Lethie.

Astonishment took the place of apprehension, faces relaxed, feet became busy. Aunt Ailsie, who had not been able to suppress a cry of fear, laid a trembling hand on Uncle Ephraim's arm.

"Hit's a meracle!" she exclaimed.

"Hit is," he agreed, solemnly.

She ran to Virginia and Amy, in her excitement throwing an arm about each.

"Do you see that sight—Fulty and Darcy a-playing together in the same game, as peaceable as lambs?"

"Yes," they said.

"I would n't believe if I did n't see," she declared. "Women, if I was sot down in Heaven, I could n't be more happier than I am

this day; and two angels with wings could n't look half as good to me as you two gals. And I love you for allus-to-come, and I want you to take the night with me a-Monday, if you feel to."

"We shall love to come."

"And I'll live on the thoughts of seeing you once more. And, women,"—she drew them close and dropped her voice low,— "seems like hit purely breaks my heart to think of you two sweet creaturs a-living a lone-lie life like you do, without ary man to your name. And there hain't no earthly reason for hit to go on. I know a mighty working widow-man over on Powderhorn, with a good farm, and a tight house, and several head of property, and nine orphant young-uns. I'll get the word acrost to him right off; and if one of you don't please him, t'other will; and quick as I get one fixed in life I'll start on t'other. And you jest take heart—I'll gorrontee you won't live lone-lie much longer, neither of you!"

*The Quare Women, 1923*

# Daughter

ERSKINE CALDWELL

At sunrise a Negro on his way to the big house to feed the mules had taken the word to Colonel Henry Maxwell, and Colonel Henry 'phoned the sheriff. The sheriff had hustled Jim into town and locked him up in the jail, and then he went home and ate breakfast.

Jim walked around the empty cell-room while he was buttoning his shirt, and after that he sat down on the bunk and tied his shoe laces. Everything that morning had taken place so quickly that he even had not had time to get a drink of water. He got up and went to the water bucket near the door, but the sheriff had forgotten to put water in it.

By that time there were several men standing in the jail yard. Jim went to the window and looked out when he heard them talking. Just then another automobile drove up, and six or seven men got out. Other men were coming towards the jail from both directions of the street.

"What was the trouble out at your place this morning, Jim?" somebody said.

Jim stuck his chin between the bars and looked at the faces in the crowd. He knew everyone there.

While he was trying to figure out how everybody in town had heard about his being there, somebody else spoke to him.

"It must have been an accident, wasn't it, Jim?"

A colored boy hauling a load of cotton to the gin drove up the street. When the wagon got in front of the jail, the boy whipped up the mules with the ends of the reins and made them trot.

"I hate to see the State have a grudge against you, Jim," somebody said.

The sheriff came down the street swinging a tin dinner pail in his hand. He pushed through the crowd, unlocked the door, and set the pail inside.

Several men came up behind the sheriff and looked over his shoulder into the jail.

"Here's your breakfast my wife fixed up for you, Jim. You'd better eat a little, Jim boy."

Jim looked at the pail, at the sheriff, at the open jail door, and Jim shook his head.

"I don't feel hungry," he said. "Daughter's been hungry, though—awfully hungry."

The sheriff backed out the door, his hand going to the handle of his pistol. He backed out so quickly that he stepped on the toes of the men behind him.

"Now, don't get careless, Jim boy," he said. "Just sit and calm yourself."

He shut the door and locked it. After going a few steps towards the street he stopped and looked into the chamber of his pistol to make sure that it had been loaded.

The crowd outside the window pressed in closer. Some of the men rapped on the bars until Jim came and looked out. When he saw them, he stuck his chin between the iron and gripped his hands around it.

"How come it to happen, Jim?" somebody asked. "It must have been an accident, wasn't it?"

Jim's long thin face looked as if it would come through the bars. The sheriff came up to the window to see if everything was all right.

"Now just take it easy, Jim boy," he said.

The man who had asked Jim to tell what had happened, elbowed the sheriff out of the way. The other men crowded closer.

"How come, Jim?" he said. "Was it an accident?"

"No," Jim said, his fingers twisting about the bars. "I picked up the shotgun and done it."

The sheriff pushed towards the window again.

"Go on, Jim, and tell us what it's all about."

Jim's face squeezed between the bars until it looked as though only his ears kept his head from coming through.

"Daughter said she was hungry, and I just couldn't stand it no longer. I just couldn't stand to hear her say it."

"Don't get all excited now, Jim boy," the sheriff said, pushing forward one moment and being elbowed away the next.

"She waked up in the middle of the night again and said she was hungry. I just couldn't stand to hear her say it."

Somebody pushed all the way through the crowd until he got to the window.

"Why, Jim, you could have come and asked me for something for her to eat, and you know I'd have given you all I got in the world."

The sheriff pushed forward once more.

"That wasn't the right thing to do," Jim said. "I've been working all year and I made enough for all of us to eat."

He stopped and looked down into the faces on the other side of the bars.

"I made enough working on shares, but they came and took it all away from me. I couldn't go around begging after I'd made enough to keep us. They just came and took it all off. Then daughter woke up again this morning saying she was hungry, and I just couldn't stand it no longer."

"You'd better go and get on the bunk now, Jim boy," the sheriff said.

"It don't seem right that the little girl ought to be shot like that, Jim," somebody said.

"Daughter said she was hungry," Jim said. "She'd been saying that for all the past month. Daughter'd wake up in the middle of the night and say it. I just couldn't stand it no longer."

"You ought to have sent her over to my house, Jim. Me and my wife could have fed her somehow. It don't look right to kill a little girl like her."

"I'd made enough for all of us," Jim said. "I just couldn't stand it no longer. Daughter'd been hungry all the past month."

"Take it easy, Jim boy," the sheriff said, trying to push forward.

The crowd swayed from one side to the other.

"And so you just picked up the gun this morning and shot her?" somebody said.

"When she woke up again this morning saying she was hungry, I just couldn't stand it."

The crowd pushed closer. Men were coming towards the jail from all directions, and those who were then arriving pushed forward to hear what Jim had to say.

"The State has got a grudge against you now, Jim," somebody said; "but somehow it don't seem right."

"I can't help it," Jim said. "Daughter woke up again this morning that way."

The jail yard, the street, and the vacant lot on the other side was filled with men and boys. All of them were pushing forward to hear Jim. Word had spread all over town by that time that Jim Carlisle had shot and killed his eight-year-old daughter, Clara.

"Who does Jim share-crop for?" somebody asked.

"Colonel Henry Maxwell," a man in the crowd said. "Colonel Henry has had Jim out there about nine or ten years."

"Henry Maxwell didn't have no business coming and taking all the shares. He's got plenty of his own. It ain't right for Henry Maxwell to come and take Jim's too."

The sheriff was pushing forward once more.

"The State's got a grudge against Jim now," somebody said. "Somehow it don't seem right, though."

The sheriff pushed his shoulder between the crowd of men and worked his way in closer.

A man shoved the sheriff away.

"Why did Henry Maxwell come and take your share of the crop, Jim?"

"He said I owed it to him because one of his mules died a month ago."

The sheriff got in front of the barred window.

"You ought to go to the bunk now and rest some, Jim boy," he said. "Take off your shoes and stretch out, Jim boy."

He was elbowed out of the way.

"You didn't kill the mule, did you, Jim?"

"The mule dropped dead in the barn," Jim said. "I wasn't nowhere around. It just dropped dead."

The crowd was pushing harder. The men in front were jammed against the jail, and the men behind were trying to get within earshot. Those in the middle were squeezed against each other so tightly they could not move in any direction. Everyone was talking louder.

Jim's face pressed between the bars and his fingers gripped the iron until the knuckles were white.

The milling crowd was moving across the street to the vacant lot. Somebody was shouting. He climbed up on an automobile and began swearing at the top of his lungs.

A man in the middle of the crowd pushed his way out and went to his automobile. He got in and drove off alone.

Jim stood holding to the bars and looking through the window. The sheriff had his back to the crowd, and he said something to Jim. Jim did not hear what he said.

A man on his way to the gin with a load of cotton stopped to find out what the trouble was. He looked at the crowd in the vacant lot for a moment, and then he turned and looked at Jim behind the bars. The shouting across the street was growing louder.

"What's the trouble, Jim?"

Somebody on the other side of the street came to the wagon.

He put his foot on a spoke in the wagon wheel and looked up at the man on the cotton while he talked.

"Daughter woke up this morning again saying she was hungry," Jim said.

The sheriff was the only person who heard him.

The man on the load of cotton jumped to the ground, tied the reins to the wagon wheel, and pushed through the crowd to the car where all the swearing was being done. After listening for awhile, he came back to the street, called a Negro who was standing with the other colored men on the corner, and handed him the reins. The Negro drove off with the cotton towards the gin, and the man went back into the crowd.

Just then the man who had driven off alone in his car came back. He sat for a moment under the steering wheel, and then he opened the door and jumped to the ground. He opened the rear door and took out a crowbar as long as he was tall.

"Pry that jail door open and let Jim out," somebody said. "It ain't right for him to be in there."

The crowd in the vacant lot was moving again. The man who had been standing on top of the automobile jumped to the ground, and the men moved towards the street in the direction of the jail.

The first man to reach it jerked the six-foot crowbar out of the soft earth where it had been jabbed.

The sheriff backed off.

"Now, take it easy, Jim boy," he said.

He turned and started walking rapidly up the street towards his house.

*Kneel to the Rising Sun, 1933*

# Cotton Mill

SHERWOOD ANDERSON

I

Of all the American industrial developments none I have seen excites me more than the cotton mill. The cotton mill—all of them I have seen are in the South—is usually housed in a long brick building. The building is as large as a city block. To this building the cotton comes in its bales from the gins. You go in. It is a little difficult to get into a Southern cotton mill these days. Cotton-mill owners and managers have become suspicious of writers. I wish they would not be suspicious of me. I would like to stay in such mills for long, long hours. I would like to go in day after day, to sit for hours watching the mechanical wonders of these places. To me modern industry is like an ocean, it is like a river in flood. It is irresistible. There is a Mississippi of machinery here. There is something stirring to the blood here. Here, in this Southern cotton mill I have come into, is one of the finest manifestations surely of the modern American mind. There is something singing here, something dancing. Here, in making this mill, man has created something as complex and strange as the growth of a tree or a stalk of corn. I am enamoured of it all. Little fingers seem playing over my nerves. See that doffer there. He is a workman. He has tuned his young body to the dance of the machine he attends. It frightens me a little when I think of him making those strange, rapid movements all day, in tune with that machine, but I am not he. I am a man out of another age. I am getting old. Old men are of no account. I do not understand my own sons. See that workman there. He is fitting all the movements of his young body to the rapid, jerky movements of that machine.

I would like to write prose like that. If I could write a volume of such prose and the writing of it shook me to pieces, so that I died, what would I care? I would like to make prose dance with the strange, rapid, jerky movements of these machines. I would like to make it dance as the machine dances and as that young cotton-mill doffer is dancing there. I would like to make it dance with the machine.

In here, in this mill, I forget the grim streets of this Southern mill town. I forget the tired "lint-heads" pouring out at the gates

of the mill yard at night. I forget the long, hot, sultry summer days in the mills, the dust and lint in the air. I am an American enamoured of the machine. In here something inside me dances with the machine.

You see here in this cotton mill—it is a modern one—the cotton coming in. The bales are broken open. It is attacked by the pickers. They are loosening and shaking the baled cotton. They shake it out of the bales in which it has come from the gin, they roll and toss it, they pick at it, they shake it.

See, it is becoming a fluffy, rolling mass now.

It is, however, not clean; it is not shaken, loosened enough. The room is full of dust. Negroes work in here. Dust and dirt gather in great pans under the machines, the pickers. The bales have come directly from the fields to the mills. You know about the movement in the South, the great movement, the movement to take the cotton mill to the cotton fields.

The movement, when it started, sprang up all over the South. It came after the South had begun to recover a bit from the depressing effect of defeat in the Civil War and after reconstruction, after the Tragic Era. The cotton barons of the old South had come near ruining agriculture over great spaces of the South. In the State of Georgia there are, I am told, millions of acres of unproductive land. The land, after the great cotton barons had passed on, was being cropped by tenant farmers, mostly blacks. The people all over the South were poor. After the Civil War it was thought rather a disgrace to have money anywhere in the South. It meant you had not given all to the Cause. They have got well over that.

Besides the merchants, the professional men, and the blacks there was, from early days, a huge number of poor whites. These people had lived miserable lives. Their lot had been a sorry one in slavery days. It was worse afterward. They had fought for the old South and after Lee's surrender came home to live on the depleted land and in the hills. Every one has heard how they are of the purest Anglo-Saxon stock, what fine old Anglo-Saxon names are to be found among them, and all that. It is true enough that there are some fine human types. They are certainly not all fine. They stood absolutely still for a long time. America moved forward into the new industrial age but, until the coming of the cotton mill to the cotton fields, they did not move. As a class they were poor, uneducated and miserable. There was no money for

education. The South was ruined. How can you have schools to educate people if you cannot tax the people or collect taxes? It is difficult to collect taxes from people who have nothing.

So there the South was and then the cotton mill came. A few mills had been established before the Civil War and, when intelligently managed, they had been profitable. They were profitable in more ways than one. Besides bringing in money for their owners these early mills began at once to do something else. A few poor whites began to trickle into the mill towns. The mills began to bring into employment a class of people who, under the old Southern system—the labor in the fields being largely Negro labor—had been apparently quite useless, not taken into account. After all, only a very small percentage of the whites in the old South were slave owners. There weren't so many barons.

These early mill builders were often quite heroic men. They had to fight hard to get capital for the new and untried enterprise, they had to educate their labor to the work. Theirs was not an easy task.

The poor white labor was scattered. It lived in the hills. It lived in little, unpainted shacks out on the hot, red plains. The people had to be gathered in, they had to be trained. Because most of the early mills were run by water power they were built on the banks of creeks and rivers, often far from the towns and cities. It was necessary to build villages for the people. All of the early mills had their villages. A tradition was established and it is to be said for these early mill builders, the pioneers of the cotton-mill industry of the South, that from the beginning they realized the need of education for their people. It was the only way to raise the standard of workmen. The early mill-village children were worked at a tender age but this had been the old tradition of cotton mills. In New England mill children of twelve were being worked fourteen hours a day.

There was William Gregg, of Graniteville, in South Carolina. Doctor Broadus Mitchell of Johns Hopkins has written a book about Gregg. He was the master of one of the more famous pre-Civil War mills. Here he comes, down along a dusty Southern road on a spring day. He is coming from his own big house on a hill and is going to his mill, at Graniteville.

He is driving his horse Jim, both he and the horse being widely known in all that country, and sits there in his buggy, a huge figure of a man with a buggy whip in his hand. Surely, at any rate, here is not the typical figure of the old South as we, in the

North, have been taught to see it. There is no long, black coat and black tie here. This man has not the orator's mouth. It is a hard, strong-looking figure of a man with a shrewd eye. As you look at the man, see him in an old print, you at once begin thinking of sturdy determined Northern men who helped to bring on the industrial age—let's say Mr. Mark Hanna, of Ohio, or Cyrus McCormick, of Illinois.

Mr. Gregg is looking about him with a wary eye as he rides along the road. Now he sees a movement in the bushes. He climbs quickly from his buggy and dashes into a thicket. Some boys of six or eight are hiding in the thicket, having seen him coming. They are playing hooky from the school set up by the mill. He drives them out. He is holding his buggy whip in his hand.

"Get out of here, you. To school with you. If I catch you again, not going to school, I'll take your hide off."

This William Gregg, who thus drives the children of the poor whites into his school house and later to the mill, will go on picnics with them. He will drive through his mill village in his buggy, back of his old gelding Jim, the buggy piled high with peaches and apples from his farm, throwing the peaches and apples to children running beside him in the road. He died at sixty-seven, after the Civil War, after he had re-established his mill, died of a sickness got standing all day to the waist in icy-cold water—it was in the winter—working among his workmen, repairing the broken dam that brought the power to the mill.

The Civil War came and went and the South was a destroyed South. The old cotton barons were gone now, the blacks were free. No one knew quite what to do with them and they did not know what to do with themselves. The South was broke. It was a wreck. Then the people began a little to stir about. Life did go on. The Negroes were getting back to the land. Gradually the carpet-baggers were driven out. A new kind of Southern life began. What began in the South then is going on now. The South had to make a complete readjustment.

There were the Negroes, brought thus suddenly into a new relationship with the whites. That problem had to be handled and it was a real problem. It isn't settled yet. In trying to settle it the South has had to go through terrible times. There have been outbursts of brutality, race riots, lynchings, queer cross-currents of religious and social prejudices of all kinds.

Out of the old South, however, something did survive. The new cotton mills survived. In some way, in some of the mills, after

the Civil War, the wrecked machinery was repaired, money was found (at cruel rates of interest), new machinery was bought, dams were repaired, the wheels started turning again. The South knew how to make cotton and at that time the boll weevil had not yet come. There was the land. The labor of the land, Negro labor, knew how to crop for cotton, how to tend it. Cotton came rolling in. The wheels in the mills turned. Profits began to trickle in. The white South shook itself. It blinked. "Well, here's something," it cried.

The cotton mills were something for others besides the poor whites. Not every young man who wanted to rise could be a lawyer or a doctor. Already every Southern town was overloaded with young lawyers and doctors. The North had gone in for industrial development and wealth was pouring in. Men from the South, going North, looked about. The Civil War had passed, apparently almost unnoticed there. There were a few old soldiers standing about and telling war tales, politicians were waving the bloody shirt and there were parades, but new lands were being opened up, new factories being built everywhere, towns were springing up and everywhere great, brick school houses and colleges. "The mills will do it for the South too," the Southerners cried, going back South.

"Take the mills to the cotton fields."

"Take the mills to the cotton fields."

The industrial movement in the South took on something of the nature of a religious revival. There was Henry W. Grady, of *The Constitution*, at Atlanta, crying out of the new South. Even Northern schoolboys recited his rolling sentences. You may see his statue on a busy street in Atlanta now, not far from the press rooms of *The Constitution*—a short, strong, little figure of a man he was—he stands there with an arm raised, one foot advanced.

"There was a South. . . ."

"There is a South. . . ."

The new South wasn't yet, in spite of these stirring cries, but it was in the air. Every one was in the movement, every Southern town wanted a cotton mill. American towns, North or South, have never yet had the courage to say to industries, "Come in but come in on decent terms." They have always let them come on any terms. Capital was in some way found. The records for profits, under adverse conditions, made by the Southern mills that had survived the Civil War brought in Northern capital. The East always has been financially friendly to the South.

There was labor, cheap white labor, plenty of it. White labor was poor, miserably poor. It could be had on almost any terms and pretty much can yet.

Mills and mill villages were built everywhere. The South is dotted with them. They are clustered about the edges of the larger cities, strangely isolated, set distinctly off from neighboring houses, they are in the very heart of big Southern American towns. Sometimes the mill village stands alone. It very near makes up a town. There are only a few houses, set outside the circle, and these are for the necessary white men, the mill superintendents, doctors and others. There is a sense in which the mill hands of the South are not white men. They are "lint-heads." The mill village is not a village. It is a hill. It matters not how level the land on which it stands, it is on a hill. The mill village is called "Mill Hill."

The cotton mill is a complex thing. Here is this cotton, brought into the mill in its bales. The machines begin to handle it. They roll and toss it. Now it has begun to move forward in the mill, a moving snowy mass. As it moves forward the machines caress it, they stir it—iron fingers reach softly and tenderly down to it.

The cotton has come into the mill still impregnated with the dust of the fields. There are innumerable little black and brown specks in it. Tiny particles, of trash from the fields, bits of the dry, brown cotton boll, cling to it, tiny ends of sticks are enmeshed in it. The cotton gin has removed the seed but there are these particles left.

The fibre of the cotton is delicate and short.

Here is a great machine, weighing tons. See the great wheels, the iron arms moving, feel the vibrations in the air now, all the little iron fingers moving. See how delicately the fingers caress the moving mass. They shake it, they comb it, they caress it. Every movement here is designed to cleanse the cotton, making it always whiter and cleaner, and to lay the delicate fibres of the mass, more and more, into parallel lines.

And now it is clean and has begun to emerge from the larger machines in a thin film. You have been in the fields in the early morning and have seen how the dew on the spider webs, spun from weed-top to weed-top, shines and glistens in the morning sun. See how delicate and fragile it is.

But not more delicate or film-like, not more diaphanous, than the thin sheet now emerging from yonder huge machine. You may pass your hand under the moving sheet. Look through it and

you may see the lines in the palm of your hand. Yonder great ponderous machine did that. Man made that machine. He made it to do that thing. There is something blind or dead in those of us who do not see and feel the wonder of it. What delicacy of adjustment, what strength with delicacy. Do you wonder that the little mill girls—half children, some of them—many of them I have seen with such amazingly delicate and sensitive faces—do you wonder that they are half in love with the machines they tend, as modern boys are half in love with the automobiles they drive?

I myself have heard mill girls talk. I have sat with them in rooms in their houses in the mill villages talking. They are almost always tired. The great body of these girls and women in Southern mills work twelve hours a day sixty hours a week. They are, by any decent modern standard of living, criminally underpaid and often criminally young for such work. No doubt there is being done through them, through this exploitation of the young white working womanhood of the South, what the cotton barons once did to so many thousands of acres of the Southern soil. They are being depleted, sapped of their strength while they are young.

They talk, always of the mills. They speak of the low wages and long hours, but that is often but a passing phase of their talk. They are quite hopeless about any remedy for that now. "There are so many of us wanting work," they say. "There are so many of us." They speak of that but you should see the fire in their eyes when they speak of the superintendent or the mill owner who does not know how to run his mill, who does not know how to keep the machines clean and in order, who is not up to the efficiency of the machines. There is American scorn of the bad mechanic in every one I have heard talk.

But now the thin sheet, the diaphanous film-like sheet that has come from the more ponderous of the machines—quite clean now, the fibres lying in their parallel lines—comes forth and gathers itself together to be spun. It passed over and, by some inner convolutions too complex for my brain, about a flying spool.

It has emerged from the great machine in a thread as large as my finger, soft and fluffy.

Now it begins to travel, faster, faster, faster. The thread flies through the air. It darts down into other machines and emerges again. It flies on and on. It flies in the air. It is picked up by iron fingers. It is caressed by rolls covered with leather made from the

tender bellies of sheep. It is elongated. It is twisted. The air in the great room is filled with the flying thread.

The room is as large as a city block.

There are flying belts everywhere.

Long rows of spools whirl and clatter.

Fingers, like the fingers of a violin virtuoso, touch it.

They pick it up.

They grasp it.

Two threads are twisted into one.

Now four, now six, now eight, now ten.

The thread breaks and a little mill girl springs forward.

Her quick fingers clutch it.

They twist it, they tie it.

On it goes.

(A conversation overheard.)

*"Jim, did you see the face of that kid down there? Look at the forced intensity of the eyes. The eyes look tired, don't they?"*

*"Well, it is a killing pace. Faster, faster, faster. We are sure nuts on speed, Joe."*

*"The speed-up, eh? Sure."*

*"Well, cotton is still king. Long live the king."*

*"Do you know, Jim, that they speak of kids like that in this town as 'trash, Crackers, lint-heads,' do you know that travelling salesmen, insurance agents, soda fountain clerks, a lot of gabby guys, that couldn't do nothing with their hands, have contempt for such kids?"*

*"Does she do that all day, Joe?"*

*"Sure, Jim, she can't take a chance on losing her job, can she?"*

*"Take a look at these machines, Jim, listen to them. You don't think they can stop, do you, because a kid like that is a little tired, because maybe she's sick? If she can't stand the gaff let her get out of the way. There's plenty of kids."*

The thread is moving. It is getting firmer and harder. It flies here and there faster and faster. Watch and, if you are made that way, you will think of gulls flying.

You know how the gulls above the red river, down at Savannah, whirl and dive and fall and rise.

The thread you see flying there will make cord to tie Christmas packages, it will make cord for fish nets, it will make thread for weaving fine cloth and rough cloth, firm soft cloth and hard cloth.

It will make a thousand kinds of cloth, ten thousand kinds. The journey of the spun thread has just begun.

## II

It is with an odd feeling of futility that a man interested in modern industry, sensing something of its possibilities, moved by the strength and power of its marching stride through the world contemplates the attitude taken toward it by so many of our modern American writers. To be quite in line now a man should be quite hopeless of everything American and surely America is industrial. There the factories are. They are everywhere. They have crept out through the Middle West. They are invading town after town of the South.

The factories are there and they have walls, too many walls. Nowadays more and more of them have fences built about them. Every one speaks of them in an impersonal way. It is too much taken for granted that all of this marvellous American advance in the manufacture of goods means nothing, that there is, in the American people, in the American character, nothing that may eventually turn all this to account.

We see communistic Russia striving desperately to industrialize. What does that mean? The attitude toward the factories and industrialism is too much like the present popular attitude toward the American small town.

We all remember that, a few years ago, there was published here a certain very popular novel built about an American small town. It has been read all over the world. It has made a certain definite fixed picture of life in the American small town in innumerable minds. . . .

I have seen recently a sample of what can be done in the field of Southern industry. A certain well-known and very popular writer recently issued a small book about the cotton mills. As I understand the matter the writer went to a town in the South in the employ of a certain newspaper syndicate. There was a terrible situation there. Certain people, mill hands, were fighting for better working conditions in the mill. They wanted, of course, better wages and shorter hours. A strike was called.

The strike was called at night when the night shift was on and the workers, men and women who had left the mill, gathered about the mill gate. This was in the early morning, in the gray dawn. The strikers at the mill gate tried to stop the workers of the day shift from passing through the gate. The sheriff, with his

deputies, had been called. A struggle started and five or six workers were killed. It is said they were all shot in the back as they were fleeing from the scene. It is about this incident that the story of Southern industry, as told in the booklet is built.

It is a booklet that sets forth the wrongs of labor, and I have no quarrel with that. It attacks certain people, mill managers, a certain merchant and others. Let these people look out for themselves. All the usual stage figures, so commonly used nowadays in writing of the small town, are in this town. There are, of course, the Kiwanians and the Rotarians. There are bullies swaggering through the streets.

It is like so many of this kind of books and magazine articles. You can't quarrel with its facts, only it does not tell enough facts. This sort of thing is no doubt good reporting of certain phases of life now in all American towns and, in particular, of our industrial towns. It is good reporting of certain phases of life now in towns and cities all over the industrial world. It is good reporting and it is to my mind very bad reporting. There are too many bullies, too many Kiwanians.

For example, in the description of the Southern town to which I refer, there is a lot of space devoted to a certain lady stockholder of the mill. We are given a quick, sketchy picture of the woman. She, it seems, is a maiden lady who sits, I presume, in a great house, somewhere in a distant city, and receives dividend checks. From time to time she is presumed to issue orders. The screws are put to the little mill girls of the South at her command. It is this kind of writing that seems to be all nonsense, and that is at the bottom of the harm such ink-slinging can do.

To my mind this particular rich woman (I know nothing of her, but let us take her as a type) is simply an American woman who has money. . . . There is this unknown maiden lady of a distant city who has this money invested in a cotton mill. Let us say she inherited it. She may never have been in a mill town. As an individual, put into personal touch with one of the little mill girls, she might well be more moved, more personally sympathetic than the writer who uses her as a kind of terrible example.

Labor in America, and in particular in the South, has got a long struggle ahead of it. The situation is infinitely complex. As we all know, the coming of the machine and the constant improvement of the machine has everywhere intensified the problem of American life. The machine—and at work it is a gorgeously beau-

tiful thing—is every year throwing more and more men and women out of employment.

And out of all this situation what will we get from much of the writing about the Southern labor situation? We will get new people to hate. A few individuals, a few mill managers will be selected. We will be made to feel that he or she is to blame.

American people need now, more than they ever did need anything in the whole span of our complex civilization, to realize that working people are people. They need to know that the woman investor in a cotton mill is just a woman, caught in the trap as we are all caught. They need to know that the little mill girl, flying about down there, so intense, so weary sometimes, beneath that huge beautiful machine, is a little girl. They need to know that she is exactly like your daughter and my daughter. The traveling salesman needs to know that, the Rotarian, the mill owner, the intellectual.

As to a particular woman investor in the stock of a cotton mill, selected here as a type, I know nothing of her, but a few days ago, as an experiment, I went with her case into a mill village. It was a Sunday afternoon. There was a little mill girl I had met who lived in the worst mill village in the Southern city I was in, a mill village of which the other mill owners of the city were all ashamed, and I went to see her. Her father was ill. He was an old workman lying on a cheap bed in a cheap, ugly room. I sat in the chair beside his bed. The day was cold and gray, and there was a small fire burning in a fire-place. The old workman had hurt his back, lifting a bale of cotton in the mill, and said he would have to stay in bed for two or three weeks. I passed him a cigarette and we smoked. It was just such a house and such a mill village as I had seen described in many of the articles about mill towns. The walls of the room were dirty. There were old newspapers pasted on the walls to keep out the cold. The old workman's daughter sat there, and during the afternoon other girls, all mill girls, all lint-heads, came and went. There were fat girls and slim girls. Some of the girls had coarse sensual faces, while the faces of others were fine and sensitive. They were just people.

And so I took up with them the case of our lady investor. I described her position, gave her a fictitious name. I spoke bitterly of her. I blamed her for the poverty of the mill village in which they lived. They did not know who owned the mill in which they worked. I pretended my fictitious lady owned it.

We discussed her. One of the girls laughed. I remember that

she had just explained that she was tired. She couldn't have been over fifteen. All of these girls worked in that particular mill twelve hours a day. "I never do get rested," she said. She laughed about my fictitious lady and her case. "I'd sure like to have a million dollars myself," she said. "I wouldn't speak to any of you kids," she laughed at the others. "Gee, but I would wear swell clothes," she said.

Again I brought the conversation back to my rich woman investor. "Ah, you let her alone," the girls said. They were all agreed that she should not be thus attacked.

"Ah, you let her alone," they said, "what does she know about us?"

Again I have returned to the mill. I am in a weaving room now. It is another huge room. This room is a forest of belts. The belts, hundreds of them in this one room, go up to the ceiling as straight as pine trees in a Georgia wood.

They are flying, flying, flying.

There are fifteen hundred looms in here. This mill has fifty thousand spindles. The looms are not so large. They come up to a man's waist. They clatter and shout. They talk like a million blackbirds in a field. Here, in this room, as everywhere in modern industry, there is something vibrant in the air. The inside of such a room is like the inside of a piano, being played furiously. It is like the inside of an automobile, going at eighty miles an hour.

All modern industry is like that. We who stand aside from it know nothing. (Most of us do stand aside. We know nothing about it.) It is only these women in this room, these boys, these young girls, these dim figures that come here in the dawn, stumbling along the streets of mill villages—some of the villages quite neat, well-built villages, with paved streets and flowers in the yard—others horrible enough—these people stumbling home at night filled with a weariness unknown to us who do not stand all day by these machines, these are the ones who know.

Drive a high-powered automobile at sixty miles an hour, twelve hours a day for twelve months. That will tell you something. How can a man stand for even an hour in the presence of modern machinery and not get into his own being at least some desire for something of the balance, the delicacy, the truth that in some queer way do lie in the machine?

I am protesting against an unbalanced view of modern industrial life. I protest against the point of view that sees nothing in

the small town but Rotarians and boosters, that sees nothing in industry but devils and martyrs, that does not see people as people, realizing that we are all caught in a strange new kind of life. Is this man, this mill superintendent, showing me through this mill, a brute? Is every man and woman in America who owns stock in a mill thereby outside the human circle? It is true perhaps that these people do not see what all this modern, gorgeous machinery is doing to people. Who does see?

There is, in a recent article I have seen regarding a Southern mill town where there was a strike, the figure of a little merchant. He is a little brute. Often the merchants of these small towns where there are mills do turn against labor when labor is in trouble, when labor is striving to better its conditions. But in the article to which I refer the particular merchant is again taken as a type of all American small-town merchants. He swaggers up and down the lobby of a small hotel. He calls people names. He tells what he would do to labor if he had a chance. He is but one figure. Right now, in towns all over the South—the textile industry being in the slack period, many people being out of work—are quiet, small merchants who are going broke, giving credit to down-and-out mill people they know can never pay.

Let me repeat again. American people need, more than they have ever needed anything else, to realize that working people, in factories and mills everywhere, and the industrialist too, are people.

Let us return for a moment to the American small town. A moment ago I spoke of a certain book, taken as a type, that has created a certain impression. We have to presume that any writer, writing thus of life in American small towns, got his impression from the small town from which he himself came. He must have seen his home town as an ugly place and so all towns became ugly to him. The conclusion seems inevitable.

There it is.

There is a young painter living in the city of New York. He works there at night in a stockbroker's office. When he is not too tired he tries to paint in his room during the day. Once, by chance, I saw a painting of his. I bought the painting. I own it now. The painting was of fruit in a basket. There were apples in the basket and pears and peaches and grapes. A bottle sat on a table. I bought the painting because it seemed to me that the young man had painted apples because he felt apples. He felt the ripeness of grapes, the flesh of peaches.

He was a young painter who, having no money and wanting to paint in the daytime, worked at night. He dreamed of a day coming when he would not be tired. "Perhaps I will really paint a little then," he said. He spoke of open fields, of apples growing on trees. He spoke of red apples fallen on dry, gray grass in an orchard in the fall. He spoke of many things and among others of a country from which he had come as a young boy, and to which he hopes some day to return. "I want to go back there," he said. "I want to paint there." He spoke of river valleys and of creeks at the edge of his native town. It was an American town. He said willows grew along the creek. He spoke of white farmhouses seen through trees, of white farmhouses clinging to the sides of hills.

"There is something to paint there," he said. "If I ever get money enough I'll go back there and I'll stay there."

"It is a lovely town," he said, and I speak of this young man here because, by an odd chance, my young painter came from the very town from which had come the writer mentioned above who, we must conclude, by the way in which he has written of the American small town, has hated it so.

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# Reconstructed But Unregenerate

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

I

It is out of fashion in these days to look backward rather than forward. About the only American given to it is some unreconstructed Southerner, who persists in his regard for a certain terrain, a certain history, and a certain inherited way of living. He is punished as his crime deserves. He feels himself in the American scene as an anachronism, and knows he is felt by his neighbors as a reproach.

Of course he is a tolerably harmless reproach. He is like some quaint local character of eccentric but fixed principles who is thoroughly and almost pridefully accepted by the village as a rare exhibit in the antique kind. His position is secure from the interference of the police, but it is of a rather ambiguous dignity.

I wish now that he were not so entirely taken for granted, and that as a reproach he might bear a barb and inflict a sting. I wish that the whole force of my own generation in the South would get behind his principles and make them an ideal which the nation at large would have to reckon with. But first I will describe him in the light of the position he seems now to occupy actually before the public.

His fierce devotion is to a lost cause—though it grieves me that his contemporaries are so sure it is lost. They are so far from fearing him and his example that they even in the excess of confidence offer him a little honor, a little petting. As a Southerner I have observed this indulgence and I try to be grateful. Obviously it does not constitute a danger to the Republic; distinctly it is not treasonable. They are good enough to attribute a sort of glamour to the Southern life as it is defined for them in a popular tradition. They like to use the South as the nearest available locus for the scenes of their sentimental songs, and sometimes they send their daughters to the Southern seminaries. Not too much, of course, is to be made of this last gesture, for they do not expose to this hazard their sons, who in our still very masculine order will have to discharge the functions of citizenship, and who must accordingly be sternly educated in the principles of progress at

progressive institutions of learning. But it does not seem to make so much difference what principles of a general character the young women acquire, since they are not likely to be impaired by principles in their peculiar functions, such as virtue and the domestic duties. And so, at suitable seasons, and on the main-line trains, one may see them in some numbers, flying south or flying north like migratory birds; and one may wonder to what extent their philosophy of life will be affected by two or three years in the South. One must remember that probably their parents have already made this calculation and are prepared to answer, Not much.

The Southerner must know, and in fact he does very well know, that his antique conservatism does not exert a great influence against the American progressivist doctrine. The Southern idea today is down, and the progressive or American idea is up. But the historian and the philosopher, who take views that are thought to be respectively longer and deeper than most, may very well reverse this order and find that the Southern idea rather than the American has in its favor the authority of example and the approval of theory. And some prophet may even find it possible to expect that it will yet rise again. . . .

## II

The Southern states were settled, of course, by miscellaneous strains. But evidently the one which determined the peculiar tradition of the South was the one which came out of Europe most convinced of the virtues of establishment, contrasting with those strains which seem for the most part to have dominated the other sections, and which came out of Europe feeling rebellious toward all establishments. There are a good many faults to be found with the old South, but hardly the fault of being intemperately addicted to work and to gross material prosperity. The South never conceded that the whole duty of man was to increase material production, or that the index to the degree of his culture was the volume of his material production. His business seemed to be rather to envelop both his work and his play with a leisure which permitted the activity of intelligence. On this assumption the South pioneered her way to a sufficiently comfortable and rural sort of establishment, considered that an establishment was something stable, and proceeded to enjoy the fruits thereof. The arts of the section, such as they were, were not immensely passionate, creative, and romantic; they were the eighteenth-century social arts of dress,

conversation, manners, the table, the hunt, politics, oratory, the pulpit. These were arts of living and not arts of escape; they were also community arts, in which every class of society could participate after its kind. The South took life easy, which is itself a tolerably comprehensive art.

But so did other communities in 1850, I believe. And doubtless some others do so yet; in parts of New England, for example. If there are such communities, this is their token, that they are settled. Their citizens are comparatively satisfied with the life they have inherited, and are careful to look backward quite as much as they look forward. Before the Civil War there must have been many such communities this side of the frontier. The difference between the North and the South was that the South was constituted by such communities and made solid. But solid is only a comparative term here. The South as a culture had more solidity than another section, but there were plenty of gaps in it. The most we can say is that the Southern establishment was completed in a good many of the Southern communities, and that this establishment was an active formative influence on the spaces between, and on the frontier spaces outlying, which had not yet perfected their organization of the economic life.

The old Southern life was of course not so fine as some of the traditionalists like to believe. It did not offer serious competition against the glory that was Greece or the grandeur that was Rome. It hardly began to match the finish of the English, or any other important European civilization. It is quite enough to say that it was a way of life which had been considered and authorized. The establishment had a sufficient economic base, it was meant to be stable rather than provisional, it had got beyond the pioneering stage, it provided leisure, and its benefits were already being enjoyed. It may as well be admitted that Southern society was not an institution of very showy elegance, for the so-called aristocrats were mostly home-made and countrified. Aristocracy is not the word which defines this social organization so well as squirearchy, which I borrow from a recent article by Mr. William Frier-son in the *Sewanee Review*. And even the squires, and the other classes, too, did not define themselves very strictly. They were loosely graduated social orders, not fixed as in Europe. Their relations were personal and friendly. It was a kindly society, yet a realistic one; for it was a failure if it could not be said that people were for the most part in their right places. Slavery was a feature monstrous enough in theory, but, more often than not, humane

in practice; and it is impossible to believe that its abolition alone could have effected any great revolution in society.

The fullness of life as it was lived in the ante-bellum South by the different social orders can be estimated today only by the application of some difficult sociological technique. It is my thesis that all were committed to a form of leisure, and that their labor itself was leisurely. The only Southerners who went abroad to Washington and elsewhere, and put themselves into the record, were those from the top of the pyramid. They held their own with their American contemporaries. They were not intellectually as seasoned as good Europeans, but then the Southern culture had had no very long time to grow, as time is reckoned in these matters: it would have borne a better fruit eventually. They had a certain amount of learning, which was not as formidable as it might have been: but at least it was classical and humanistic learning, not highly scientific, and not wildly scattered about over a variety of special studies.

### III

Then the North and the South fought, and the consequences were disastrous to both. The Northern temper was one of jubilation and expansiveness, and now it was no longer shackled by the weight of the conservative Southern tradition. Industrialism, the latest form of pioneering and the worst, presently overtook the North, and in due time has now produced our present American civilization. Poverty and pride overtook the South; poverty to bring her institutions into disrepute and to sap continually at her courage; and a false pride to inspire a distaste for the thought of fresh pioneering projects, and to doom her to an increasing physical enfeeblement.

It is only too easy to define the malignant meaning of industrialism. It is the contemporary form of pioneering; yet since it never consents to define its goal, it is a pioneering on principle, and with an accelerating speed. Industrialism is a program under which men, using the latest scientific paraphernalia, sacrifice comfort, leisure, and the enjoyment of life to win Pyrrhic victories from nature at points of no strategic importance. Ruskin and Carlyle feared it nearly a hundred years ago, and now it may be said that their fears have been realized partly in England, and with almost fatal completeness in America. Industrialism is an insidious spirit, full of false promises and generally fatal to establishments since, when it once gets into them for a little renovation, it pro-

poses never again to leave them in peace. Industrialism is rightfully a menial, of almost miraculous cunning but no intelligence; it needs to be strongly governed or it will destroy the economy of the household. Only a community of tough conservative habit can master it.

The South did not become industrialized; she did not repair the damage to her old establishment, either, and it was in part because she did not try hard enough. Hers is the case to cite when we would show how the good life depends on an adequate pioneering, and how the pioneering energy must be kept ready for call when the establishment needs overhauling. The Southern tradition came to look rather pitiable in its persistence when the twentieth century had arrived, for the establishment was quite depreciated. Unregenerate Southerners were trying to live the good life on a shabby equipment, and they were grotesque in their effort to make an art out of living when they were not decently making the living. In the country districts great numbers of these broken-down Southerners are still to be seen in patched blue-jeans, sitting on ancestral fences, shotguns across their laps and hound-dogs at their feet, surveying their unkempt acres while they comment shrewdly on the ways of God. It is their defect that they have driven a too easy, an unmanly bargain with nature, and that their æstheticism is based on insufficient labor.

But there is something heroic, and there may prove to be yet something very valuable to the Union, in their extreme attachment to a certain theory of life. They have kept up a faith which was on the point of perishing from this continent.

Of course it was only after the Civil War that the North and the South came to stand in polar opposition to each other. Immediately after Appomattox it was impossible for the South to resume even that give-and-take of ideas which had marked her ante-bellum relations with the North. She was offered such terms that acquiescence would have been abject. She retired within her borders in rage and held the minimum of commerce with the enemy. Persecution intensified her tradition, and made the South more solid and more Southern in the year 1875, or thereabouts, than ever before. When the oppression was left off, naturally her guard relaxed. But though the period of persecution had not been long, nevertheless the Southern tradition found itself then the less capable of uniting gracefully with the life of the Union; for that life in the meantime had been moving on in an opposite direction. The American progressive principle was like a ball rolling down

the hill with an increasing momentum, and by 1890 or 1900 it was clear to any intelligent Southerner that it was a principle of boundless aggression against nature which could hardly offer much to a society devoted to the arts of peace.

But to keep on living shabbily on an insufficient patrimony is to decline, both physically and spiritually. The South declined.

#### IV

And now the crisis in the South's decline has been reached.

Industrialism has arrived in the South. Already the local chambers of commerce exhibit the formidable data of Southern progress. A considerable party of Southern opinion, which might be called the New South party, is well pleased with the recent industrial accomplishments of the South and anxious for many more. Southerners of another school, who might be said to compose an Old South party, are apprehensive lest the section become completely and uncritically devoted to the industrial ideal precisely as the other sections of the Union are. But reconstruction is actually under way. Tied politically and economically to the Union, her borders wholly violable, the South now sees very well that she can restore her prosperity only within the competition of an industrial system.

After the war the Southern plantations were often broken up into small farms. These have yielded less and less of a living, and it is said that they will never yield a good living until once more they are integrated into large units. But these units will be industrial units, controlled by a board of directors or an executive rather than a squire, worked with machinery, and manned not by farmers living at home, but by "labor." Even so they will not, according to Mr. Henry Ford, support the population that wants to live on them. In the off seasons the laborers will have to work in factories, which henceforth are to be counted on as among the charming features of Southern landscape. The Southern problem is complicated, but at its center is the farmer's problem, and this problem is simply the most acute version of that general agrarian problem which inspires the despair of many thoughtful Americans today.

The agrarian discontent in America is deeply grounded in the love of the tiller for the soil, which is probably, it must be confessed, not peculiar to the Southern specimen, but one of the more ineradicable human attachments, be the tiller as progressive as he may. In proposing to wean men from this foolish attachment,

industrialism sets itself against the most ancient and the most humane of all the modes of human livelihood. Do Mr. Hoover and the distinguished thinkers at Washington see how essential is the mutual hatred between the industrialists and the farmers, and how mortal is their conflict? The gentlemen at Washington are mostly preaching and legislating to secure the fabulous "blessings" of industrial progress; they are on the industrial side. The industrialists have a doctrine which is monstrous, but they are not monsters personally; they are forward-lookers with nice manners, and no American progressivist is against them. The farmers are boorish and inarticulate by comparison. Progressivism is against them in their fight, though their traditional status is still so strong that soft words are still spoken to them. All the solutions recommended for their difficulties are really enticements held out to them to become a little more coöperative, more mechanical, more mobile—in short, a little more industrialized. But the farmer who is not a mere laborer, even the farmer of the comparatively new places like Iowa and Nebraska, is necessarily among the more stable and less progressive elements of society. He refuses to mobilize himself and become a unit in the industrial army, because he does not approve of army life.

I will use some terms which are hardly in his vernacular. He identifies himself with a spot of ground, and this ground carries a good deal of meaning; it defines itself for him as nature. He would till it not too hurriedly and not too mechanically to observe in it the contingency and the infinitude of nature; and so his life acquires its philosophical and even its cosmic consciousness. A man can contemplate and explore, respect and love, an object as substantial as a farm or a native province. But he cannot contemplate nor explore, respect nor love, a mere turnover, such as an assemblage of "natural resources," a pile of money, a volume of produce, a market, or a credit system. It is into precisely these intangibles that industrialism would translate the farmer's farm. It means the dehumanization of his life.

However that may be, the South at last, looking defensively about her in all directions upon an industrial world, fingers the weapons of industrialism. There is one powerful voice in the South which, tired of a long status of disrepute, would see the South made at once into a section second to none in wealth, as that is statistically reckoned, and in progressiveness, as that might be estimated by the rapidity of the industrial turnover. This desire offends those who would still like to regard the South as, in the

old sense, a home; but its expression is loud and insistent. The urban South, with its heavy importation of regular American ways and regular American citizens, has nearly capitulated to these novelties. It is the village South and the rural South which supply the resistance, and it is lucky for them that they represent a vast quantity of inertia.

Will the Southern establishment, the most substantial exhibit on this continent of a society of the European and historic order, be completely crumbled by the powerful acid of the Great Progressive Principle? Will there be no more looking backward but only looking forward? Is our New World to be dedicated forever to the doctrine of newness?

It is in the interest of America as a whole, as well as in the interest of the South, that these questions press for an answer. I will enter here the most important items of the situation as well as I can; doubtless they will appear a little over-sharpened for the sake of exhibition.

(1) The intention of Americans at large appears now to be what it was always in danger of becoming: an intention of being infinitely progressive. But this intention cannot permit of an established order of human existence, and of that leisure which conditions the life of intelligence and the arts.

(2) The old South, if it must be defined in a word, practiced the contrary and European philosophy of establishment as the foundation of the life of the spirit. The ante-bellum Union possessed, to say the least, a wholesome variety of doctrine.

(3) But the South was defeated by the Union on the battlefield with remarkable decisiveness, and the two consequences have been dire: the Southern tradition was physically impaired, and has ever since been unable to offer an attractive example of its philosophy in action; and the American progressive principle has developed into a pure industrialism without any check from a Southern minority whose voice ceased to make itself heard.

(4) The further survival of the Southern tradition as a detached local remnant is now unlikely. It is agreed that the South must make contact again with the Union. And in adapting itself to the actual state of the Union, the Southern tradition will have to consent to a certain industrialization of its own.

(5) The question at issue is whether the South will permit herself to be so industrialized as to lose entirely her historic identity, and to remove the last substantial barrier that has stood in the way of American progressivism; or will accept industrialism, but

with a very bad grace, and will manage to maintain a good deal of her traditional philosophy.

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The hope which is inherent in the situation is evident from the terms in which it is stated. The South must be industrialized—but to a certain extent only, in moderation. The program which now engages the Southern leaders is to see how the South may handle this fire without being burnt badly. The South at last is to be physically reconstructed; but it will be fatal if the South should conceive it as her duty to be regenerated and get her spirit reborn with a totally different orientation toward life.

Fortunately, the Southern program does not have to be perfectly vague. There are at least two definite lines, along either of which an intelligent Southern policy may move in the right general direction; it may even move back and forth between them and still advance.

The first course would be for the Southern leaders to arouse the sectional feeling of the South to its highest pitch of excitement in defense of all the old ways that are threatened. It might seem ungrateful to the kind industrialists to accept their handsome services in such a churlish spirit. But if one thing is more certain than another, it is that these gentlemen will not pine away in their discouragement; they have an inextinguishable enthusiasm for their rôle. The attitude that needs artificial respiration is the attitude of resistance on the part of the natives to the salesmen of industrialism. It will be fiercest and most effective if industrialism is represented to the Southern people as—what it undoubtedly is for the most part—a foreign invasion of Southern soil, which is capable of doing more devastation than was wrought when Sherman marched to the sea. From this point of view it will be a great gain if the usually-peaceful invasion forgets itself now and then, is less peaceful, and commits indiscretions. The native and the invader will be sure to come to an occasional clash, and that will offer the chance to revive ancient and almost forgotten animosities. It will be in order to proclaim to Southerners that the carpet-baggers are again in their midst. And it will be well to seize upon and advertise certain Northern industrial communities as horrible examples of a way of life we detest—not failing to point out the human catastrophe which occurs when a Southern village or rural community becomes the cheap labor of a miserable factory system. It will be a little bit harder to impress the people with the

fact that the new so-called industrial "slavery" fastens not only upon the poor, but upon the middle and better classes of society, too. To make this point it may be necessary to revive such an antiquity as the old Southern gentleman and his lady, and their scorn for the dollar-chasers.

Such a policy as this would show decidedly a sense of what the Germans call *Realpolitik*. It could be nasty and it could be effective.

Its net result might be to give to the South eventually a position in the Union analogous more or less to the position of Scotland under the British crown—a section with a very local and peculiar culture that would, nevertheless, be secure and respected. And Southern traditionalists may take courage from the fact that it was Scottish stubbornness which obtained this position for Scotland; it did not come gratuitously; it was the consequence of an intense sectionalism that fought for a good many years before its fight was won.

That is one policy. Though it is not the only one, it may be necessary to employ it, with discretion, and to bear in mind its Scottish analogue. But it is hardly handsome enough for the best Southerners. Its methods are too easily abused; it offers too much room for the professional demagogue; and one would only as a last resort like to have the South stake upon it her whole chance of survival. After all, the reconstruction may be undertaken with some imagination, and not necessarily under the formula of a literal restoration. It does not greatly matter to what extent the identical features of the old Southern establishment are restored; the important consideration is that there be an establishment for the sake of stability.

The other course may not be so easily practicable, but it is certainly more statesmanlike. That course is for the South to reënter the American political field with a determination and an address quite beyond anything she has exhibited during her half-hearted national life of the last half a century. And this means specifically that she may pool her own stakes with the stakes of other minority groups in the Union which are circumstanced similarly. There is in active American politics already, to start with, a very belligerent if somewhat uninformed Western agrarian party. Between this party and the South there is much community of interest; both desire to defend home, stability of life, the practice of leisure, and the natural enemy of both is the insidious industrial system. There are also, scattered here and there, numerous elements with the same general attitude which would have some power if united:

the persons and even communities who are thoroughly tired of progressivism and its spurious benefits, and those who have recently acquired, or miraculously through the generations preserved, a European point of view—sociologists, educators, artists, religionists, and ancient New England townships. The combination of these elements with the Western farmers and the old-fashioned South would make a formidable bloc. The South is numerically much the most substantial of these three groups, but has done next to nothing to make the cause prevail by working inside the American political system.

The unifying effective bond between these geographically diverse elements of public opinion will be the clean-cut policy that the rural life of America must be defended, and the world made safe for the farmers. My friends are often quick to tell me that against the power of the industrial spirit no such hope can be entertained. But there are some protests in these days rising against the industrial ideal, even from the centers where its grip is the stoutest; and this would indicate that our human intelligence is beginning again to assert itself. Of course this is all the truer of the European countries, which have required less of the bitter schooling of experience. Thus Dean Inge declares himself in his Romanes Lecture on "The Idea of Progress":

I believe that the dissatisfaction with things as they are is caused not only by the failure of nineteenth-century civilization, but partly also by its success. We no longer wish to progress on those lines if we could. Our apocalyptic dream is vanishing into thin air. It may be that the industrial revolution which began in the reign of George the Third has produced most of its fruits, and has had its day. We may have to look forward to such a change as is imagined by Anatole France at the end of his *Isle of the Penguins*, when, after an orgy of revolution and destruction, we shall slide back into the quiet rural life of the early modern period. If so, the authors of the revolution will have cut their own throats, for there can be no great manufacturing towns in such a society. Their disappearance will be no great loss. The race will have tried a great experiment, and will have rejected it as unsatisfying.

The South has an important part to play, if she will, in such a counter-revolution. But what pitiful service have the inept Southern politicians for many years been rendering to the cause! Their Southern loyalty at Washington has rarely had any more imaginative manifestation than to scramble vigorously for a

Southern share in the federal pie. They will have to be miraculously enlightened.

I get quickly beyond my depth in sounding these political possibilities. I will utter one last fantastic thought.

No Southerner ever dreams of heaven, or pictures his Utopia on earth, without providing room for the Democratic party. Is it really possible that the Democratic party can be held to a principle, and that the principle can now be defined as agrarian, conservative, anti-industrial? It may not be impossible, after all. If it proves possible, then the South may yet be rewarded for a sentimental affection that has persisted in the face of many betrayals.

*I'll Take My Stand, 1930*

# The Middle West



Rockwell Kent Illustration for *Moby Dick*, courtesy of R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company



# Midwestern Portraits

## 1. A Dakota

FRANCIS PARKMAN

He was a young fellow, of no note in his nation; yet in his person and equipments he was a good specimen of a Dakota warrior in his ordinary traveling dress. Like most of his people, he was nearly six feet high; lithely and gracefully, yet strongly proportioned; and with a skin singularly clear and delicate. He wore no paint; his head was bare; and his long hair was gathered in a clump behind, to the top of which was attached transversely, both by way of ornament and of talisman, the mystic whistle, made of the wingbone of the war eagle, and endowed with various magic virtues. From the back of his head descended a line of glittering brass plates, tapering from the size of a doubloon to that of a half-dime, a cumbrous ornament, in high vogue among the Dakotas, and for which they pay the traders a most extravagant price; his chest and arms were naked, the buffalo robe, worn over them when at rest, had fallen about his waist, and was confined there by a belt. This, with the gay moccasins on his feet, completed his attire. For arms he carried a quiver of dogskin at his back, and a rude but powerful bow in his hand. His horse had no bridle; a cord of hair, lashed around his jaw, served in place of one. The saddle was of most singular construction; it was made of wood covered with raw hide, and both pommel and cantle rose perpendicularly full eighteen inches, so that the warrior was wedged firmly in his seat, whence nothing could dislodge him but the bursting of the girths.

*The California and Oregon Trail, 1849*

## 2. Ishmael Bush

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

At some little distance in front of the whole, marched the individual, who, by his position and air, appeared to be the leader

of the band [of plainsmen]. He was a tall, sunburnt man, past the middle-age, of a dull countenance and listless manner. His frame appeared loose and flexible; but it was vast, and in reality of prodigious power. It was only at moments, however, as some slight impediment opposed itself to his loitering progress, that his person, which, in its ordinary gait, seemed so lounging and nerveless, displayed any of those energies which lay latent in his system, like the slumbering and unwieldy, but terrible, strength of the elephant. The inferior lineaments of his countenance were coarse, extended, and vacant; while the superior, or those nobler parts which are thought to affect the intellectual being, were low, receding, and mean.

The dress of this individual was a mixture of the coarsest vestments of a husbandman, with the leathern garments that fashion, as well as use, had in some degree rendered necessary to one engaged in his present pursuits. There was, however, a singular and wild display of prodigal and ill-judged ornaments blended with his motley attire. In place of the usual deerskin belt, he wore around his body a tarnished silken sash of the most gaudy colors; the buckhorn haft of his knife was profusely decorated with plates of silver; the martin's fur of his cap was of a fineness and shadowing that a queen might covet; the buttons of his rude and soiled blanket-coat were of the glittering coinage of Mexico; the stock of his rifle was of beautiful mahogany, riveted and banded with the same precious metal; and the trinkets of no less than three worthless watches dangled from different parts of his person. In addition to the pack and the rifle which were slung at his back, together with the well-filled and carefully guarded pouch and horn, he had carelessly cast a keen and bright wood-axe across his shoulder, sustaining the weight of the whole with as much apparent ease as if he moved unfettered in limb, and free from incumbrance.

*The Prairie, 1827*

### 3. The Indian Hater

JAMES HALL

He was a man who might have been about fifty years of age. His height did not exceed the ordinary stature, and his person

was rather slender than otherwise; but there was something in his air and features which distinguished him from common men. The expression of his countenance was keen and daring. His forehead was elevated, his cheek bones high, his lips thin and compressed. Long exposure to the climate had tanned his complexion to a deep brown, and had hardened his skin and muscles, so as to give him the appearance of a living petrification. He seemed to have lived in the open air, exposed to the elements, and to every extreme of temperature.

There was nothing in the dress of this individual to attract attention; he was accosted occasionally by others, and seemed familiar with all who were present. Yet there was an air of abstraction, and standing aloof about him, so different from the noisy mirth and thoughtless deportment of those around him, that I could not help observing him. In his eye there was something peculiar, yet I could not tell in what that peculiarity consisted. It was a small grey orb, whose calm, bold, direct glances, seemed to vouch that it had not cowered with shame, or quailed in danger. There was blended in that eye a searching keenness, with a quiet vigilance—a watchful, sagacious self-possession—so often observable in the physiognomy of those who are in the habit of expecting, meeting, and overcoming peril. His heavy eyebrows had been black, but time had touched them with his pencil. He was dressed in a coarse grey hunting shirt, of homespun cotton, girded round the waist with a broad leathern belt, tightly drawn, in which rested the long knife, with which the western hunter despatches his game, cuts his food, picks his flint and his teeth, and whittles sticks for amusement.

*The Wilderness and the War Path, 1846*

## 4. The Doubledays

CAROLINE KIRKLAND

One of my best neighbors is Mr. Philo Doubleday, a long, awkward, honest, hard-working Maine man; . . . so good-natured that he might be mistaken for a simpleton, but that must be by those that do not know him. He is quite an old settler, came in four years ago, bringing with him a wife who is to him as vinegar-bottle to oil-cruet, or as mustard to the sugar which is used to

soften its biting qualities. Mrs. Doubleday has the sharpest eyes, the sharpest nose, the sharpest tongue, the sharpest elbows, and above all, the sharpest voice that ever "penetrated the interior" of Michigan. She has a tall, straight, bony figure, in contour somewhat resembling two hard-oak planks fastened together and stood on end; and, strange to say, she was full five-and-thirty when her mature graces attracted the eye and won the affections of the worthy Philo. What eclipse had come over Mr. Doubleday's usual sagacity when he made choice of his Polly, I am sure I never could guess; but he is certainly the only man in the wide world who could possibly have lived with her; and he makes her a most excellent husband.

She is possessed with a neat devil; I have known many such cases; her floor is scoured every night, after all are in bed but the unlucky scrubber, Betsey, the maid of all work; and woe to the unfortunate "indiffidle," as neighbor Jenkins says, who first sets dirty boot on it in the morning. If men come in to talk over road-business, for Philo is much sought when "the public" has any work to do, or school-business, for that being very troublesome, and quite devoid of profit, is often conferred upon Philo, Mrs. Doubleday makes twenty errands into the room, expressing in her visage all the force of Mrs. Raddle's inquiry, "Is them wretches going?" And when at length their backs are turned, out comes the bottled vengeance. The sharp eyes, tongue, elbow, and voice are all in instant requisition.

"Fetch the broom, Betsey! and the scrub-broom, Betsey! and the mop, and that 'ere dish of soap, Betsey; and why on earth didn't you bring some ashes? You didn't expect to clean such a floor as this without ashes, did you?"

"What time are you going to have dinner, my dear?" says the imperturbable Philo, who is getting ready to go out.

"Dinner! I'm sure I don't know! there's no time to cook dinner in this house! nothing but slave, slave, slave, from morning till night, cleaning up after a set of nasty, dirty—"

"Phew!" says Mr. Doubleday, looking at his fuming helpmate with a calm smile, "It'll all rub out when it's dry, if you'll only let it alone."

"Yes, yes; and it would be plenty clean enough for you if there had been forty horses in here."

Philo on some such occasion waited till his Polly had stepped out of the room, and then with a bit of chalk wrote on the broad black-walnut mantel-piece:

Bolt and bar hold gate of wood  
Gate of iron springs make good,  
Bolt nor spring can bind the flame,  
Woman's tongue can no man tame.

and then took his hat and walked off.

*A New Home—Who'll Follow?*, 1839

## 5. Paul Bunyan

JAMES STEVENS

Paul Bunyan strapped on his snow shoes and started out through the Border forests in search of Niagara. His was a kingly figure as he mushed through the pine trees, looming above all but the very tallest of them. He wore a wine-red hunting cap, and his glossy hair and beard shone under it with a blackness that blended with the cap's color perfectly. His unique eyebrows were black also; covering a fourth of his forehead above the eyes, they narrowed where they arched down under his temples, and they ended in thin curls just in front of his ears. His mustache had natural twirls and he never disturbed it. He wore a yellow muffler this morning under his virile curly beard. His mackinaw coat was of huge orange and purple checks. His mackinaw pants were sober-seeming, having tan and light gray checks, but some small crimson dots and crosses brightened them. Green wool socks showed above his black boots, which had buckskin laces and big brass eyelets and hooks. And he wore striped mittens of white and plum color. Paul Bunyan was a gorgeous picture this morning in the frozen fields and forests, all covered with blue snow which sparkled in a pale gold light.

*Paul Bunyan*, 1925

## 6. Dick Garland, Lumberman

HAMLIN GARLAND

In addition to his military career, Dick Garland also carried with him the odor of the pine forest and exhibited the skill and

training of a forester, for in those early days even at the time when I began to remember the neighborhood talk, nearly every young man who could get away from the farm or the village went north, in November, into the pine woods which covered the entire upper part of the State, and my father, who had been a raftsman and timber cruiser and pilot ever since his coming west, was deeply skilled with axe and steering oars. The lumberman's life at that time was rough but not vicious, for the men were nearly all of native American stock, and my father was none the worse for his winters in camp.

His field of action as lumberman was for several years, in and around Big Bull Falls (as it was then called), near the present town of Wausau, and during that time he had charge of a crew of loggers in winter and in summer piloted rafts of lumber down to Dubuque and other points where saw mills were located. He was called at this time, "Yankee Dick, the Pilot."

As a result of all these experiences in the woods, he was almost as much woodsman as soldier in his talk, and the heroic life he had led made him very wonderful in my eyes. According to his account (and I have no reason to doubt it) he had been exceedingly expert in running a raft and could ride a canoe like a Chipewa. I remember hearing him very forcefully remark, "God forgot to make the man I could not follow."

He was deft with an axe, keen of perception, sure of hand and foot, and entirely capable of holding his own with any man of his weight. Amid much drinking he remained temperate, and strange to say never used tobacco in any form. While not a large man he was nearly six feet in height, deep-chested and sinewy, and of dauntless courage. The quality which defended him from attack was the spirit which flamed from his eagle-gray eyes. Terrifying eyes they were, at times, as I had many occasions to note.

As he gathered us all around his knee at night before the fire, he loved to tell us of riding the whirlpools of Big Bull Falls, or of how he lived for weeks on a raft with the water up to his knees (sleeping at night in his wet working clothes), sustained by the blood of youth and the spirit of adventure. His endurance even after his return from the war, was marvellous, although he walked a little bent and with a peculiar measured swinging stride—the stride of Sherman's veterans.

*A Son of the Middle Border, 1917*

## 7. The Meek

E. W. HOWE

My father received little aid in the conduct of these meetings except from a very good farmer, but very bad exhorter, named Theodore Meek, whose name had been gradually shortened by neighborhood familiarity until he was known as The. Meek; and for a long time I thought he was meant when reference was made to "The Meek and lowly," supposing that Lowly was an equally good man living in some of the adjoining settlements. This remarkable man laughed his religion rather than preached, or prayed, or shouted, or sang it. His singing would be regarded at this day as a very expert rendering of a laughing song, but to us it was an impressive performance, as were his praying and occasional preaching, though I wonder we were not amused. The. Meek was, after my father, the next best man in Fairview; the next largest farmer, and the next in religion and thrift. In moving to the country I think his wagons were next to ours, which headed the procession. He sat nearest the pulpit at the meetings, was the second to arrive—my father coming first—and always took up the collection. If there was a funeral, he stood next to my father, who conducted the services; at the school-meetings he was the second to speak; and if a widow needed her corn gathered, or her winter's wood chopped, my father suggested it, and The. Meek immediately said it should have been attended to before. He also lived nearer our house than any of the others, and was oftener there; and his house was built so much like ours that only experts knew it was cheaper, and not quite so large. His family, which consisted of a wife by a second marriage, and so many children that I never could remember all their names—there was always a new baby whenever its immediate predecessor was old enough to name—were laughers like him, and to a stranger it would have seemed that they found jokes in the Bible, for they were always reading the Bible, and always laughing.

*The Story of a Country Town, 1882*

## 8. The Proud Farmer

VACHEL LINDSAY

Into the acres of the newborn state  
He poured his strength, and plowed his ancient name,  
And, when the traders followed him, he stood  
Towering above their furtive souls and tame.

That brow without a stain, that fearless eye  
Oft left the passing stranger wondering  
To find such knighthood in the sprawling land,  
To see a democrat well-nigh a king.

He lived with liberal hand, with guests from far,  
With talk and joke and fellowship to spare,—  
Watching the wide world's life from sun to sun,  
Lining his walls with books from everywhere.

He read by night, he built his world by day,  
The farm and house of God to him were one.  
For forty years he preached and plowed and wrought—  
A statesman in the fields, who bent to none.

His plowmen-neighbors were as lords to him.  
His was an ironside, democratic pride.  
He served a rigid Christ, but served him well—  
And, for a lifetime, saved the countryside.

Here lie the dead, who gave the church their best  
Under his fiery preaching of the word.  
They sleep with him beneath the ragged grass . . .  
The village withers, by his voice unstirred.

And tho' his tribe be scattered to the wind  
From the Atlantic to the China Sea,  
Yet do they think of that bright lamp he burned  
Of family worth and proud integrity.

And many a sturdy grandchild hears his name  
In reverence spoken, till he feels akin  
To all the lion-eyed who build the world—  
And lion-dreams begin to burn within.

*Collected Poems, 1925*

## 9. Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight

VACHEL LINDSAY

It is portentous, and a thing of state  
That here at midnight, in our little town  
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,  
Near the old court-house pacing up and down,  
Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards  
He lingers where his children used to play,  
Or through the market, on the well-worn stones  
He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black,  
A famous high top-hat and plain worn shawl  
Make him the quaint great figure that men love,  
The prairie-lawyer, master of us all.

He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.  
He is among us:—as in times before!  
And we who toss and lie awake for long  
Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door.

His head is bowed. He thinks on men and kings.  
Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?  
Too many peasants fight, they know not why,  
Too many homesteads in black terror weep.

The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart.  
He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.  
He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now  
The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn  
Shall come;—the shining hope of Europe free:  
The league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth,  
Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.

It breaks his heart that kings must murder still,  
That all his hours of travail here for men  
Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace  
That he may sleep upon his hill again?

*The Congo and Other Poems, 1914*

## 10. Ignatius Donnelly

JOHN D. HICKS

Ignatius Donnelly of Minnesota, perhaps the greatest orator of Populism, had broken a lance for every considerable reform cause that the United States had known, beginning with pre-Civil War Republicanism. He was born in Pennsylvania on November 3, 1831, of Irish parents and had come to Minnesota in time to suffer the full effects of the panic of 1857, had turned from real estate promotion and the law to antislavery politics, and had served three terms in Congress during and after the war. He had become a Republican when to do so branded him a born reformer, and he was once again an irregular when Liberal Republicanism won his full support. Afterwards he led the Grangers of Minnesota in their war on the railroads; he went through a clean-cut and complete conversion from hard-money principles to Greenbackism; he flirted with the Union Laborites in 1888 and almost became their candidate for governor of Minnesota that year; and he now landed fairly and squarely in the forefront of the latest movement for reform. As the *New York Sun* remarked, a reform convention in Minnesota without Donnelly would have been "like catfish without waffles in Philadelphia."

The Minnesota "sage"—his neighbors called him the "sage of Nininger"—was a man of varied talents: he wrote books on popular science; delivered side-splitting lectures on "Wit and Humor"; defended in print and on the platform the Baconian theory of the authorship of Shakespeare; and talked convincingly on any subject whatever that had to do with politics or economics. No one ever denied Donnelly's oratorical skill, although his orations showed no great profundity. He was at his best in unsparing denunciation or encomium. His argumentative triumphs were won by reasoning that was adroit and clever but usually full of sophistry. No one could more easily make the worse appear the better reason, and apparently no one delighted more in doing so. He possessed remarkable facility in the use of statistics for this purpose and could fairly breathe the breath of life into the dullest of figures. Audiences listened to his deductions with interest and almost invariably with at least temporary conviction.

*The Populist Revolt, 1931*

## 11. Curtis Jadwin

FRANK NORRIS

Curtis Jadwin was a man about thirty-five, who had begun life without a sou in his pockets. He was a native of Michigan. His people were farmers, nothing more nor less than hardy, honest fellows, who ploughed and sowed for a living. Curtis had only a rudimentary schooling, because he had given up the idea of finishing his studies in the high school in Grand Rapids, on the chance of going into business with a livery stable keeper. Then in time he had bought out the business and had run it for himself. Some one in Chicago owed him money, and in default of payment had offered him a couple of lots on Wabash Avenue. That was how he happened to come to Chicago. Naturally enough as the city grew the Wabash Avenue property—it was near Monroe Street—increased in value. He sold the lots and bought other real estate, sold that and bought somewhere else, and so on, till he owned some of the best business sites in the city. Just his ground rent alone brought him, heaven knew how many thousands a year. He was one of the largest real estate owners in Chicago. But he no longer bought and sold. His property had grown so large that just the management of it alone took up most of his time. He had an office in the Rookery, and perhaps being so close to the Board of Trade Building, had given him a taste for trying a little deal in wheat now and then. As a rule, he deplored speculation. He had no fixed principles about it, like Charlie. Only he was conservative; occasionally he hazarded small operations. Somehow he had never married. There had been affairs. Oh, yes, one or two, of course. Nothing very serious. He just didn't seem to have met the right girl, that was all. He lived on Michigan Avenue, near the corner of Twenty-first Street, in one of those discouraging eternal yellow limestone houses with a basement dining-room. His aunt kept house for him, and his nieces and nephews overran the place. There was always a raft of them there, either coming or going; and the way they exploited him! He supported them all; heaven knew how many there were; such drabs and gawks, all elbows and knees, who soaked themselves with cologne and made companions of the servants. They and the second girls were always squabbling about their things that they found in each other's rooms.

*The Pit*, 1903

## 12. The Village Radical

SINCLAIR LEWIS

The universal sign of winter was the town handyman—Miles Bjornstam, a tall, thick, red-mustached bachelor, opinionated atheist, general-store arguer, cynical Santa Claus. Children loved him, and he sneaked away from work to tell them improbable stories of sea-faring and horse-trading and bears. The children's parents either laughed at him or hated him. He was the one democrat in town. He called both Lyman Cass the miller and the Finn homesteader from Lost Lake by their first names. He was known as "The Red Swede," and considered slightly insane.

Bjornstam could do anything with his hands—solder a pan, weld an automobile spring, soothe a frightened filly, tinker a clock, carve a Gloucester schooner which magically went into a bottle. Now, for a week, he was commissioner general of Gopher Prairie. He was the only person besides the repairman at Sam Clark's who understood plumbing. Everybody begged him to look over the furnace and the water-pipes. He rushed from house to house till after bedtime—ten o'clock. Icicles from burst water-pipes hung along the skirt of his brown dogskin overcoat; his plush cap, which he never took off in the house, was a pulp of ice and coal-dust; his red hands were cracked to rawness; he chewed the stub of a cigar.

*Main Street, 1920*

## 13. Don Carlos Taft

HAMLIN GARLAND

Don Carlos Taft was a singular and powerful figure, as I have already indicated, a stoic, of Oriental serenity, one who could smile in the midst of excruciating pain. With his eyes against a blank wall he was able to endlessly amuse himself by calling up the deep-laid concepts of his earlier years of study. Though affected with some obscure spinal disorder which made every movement a punishment, he concealed his suffering, no matter how intense it might be, and always answered, "Fine, fine!" when any of us asked "How are you to-day?"

He lived in Woodlawn, Illinois, as he had lived in Kansas, like a man in a diving bell. His capacious brain filled with "knowledges" of the days when Gladstone was king and Darwin an outlaw, had little room for the scientific theories of Bergson and his like. He remained the old-fashioned New England theologian converted to militant agnosticism.

Although at this time over seventy years of age his mind was notably clear, orderly and active, and his talk (usually a carefully constructed monologue) was stately, formal and precise. He used no slang, and retained scarcely a word of his boyhood's vernacular. The only emotional expression he permitted himself was a chuckle of glee over an intellectual misstatement or a historical bungle. Novels, theaters, music possessed no interest for him.

He had read, I believe, one or two of my books but never alluded to them, although he manifested a growing respect for my ability to earn money, and especially delighted in my faculty for living within my means. He watched the slow growth of my income with approving eyes. To him as to my father, earning money was a struggle, saving it a virtue, and wasting it a crime.

*A Daughter of the Middle Border, 1921*

## 14. Mrs. Harling

WILLA CATHER

Grandmother often said that if she had to live in town, she thanked God she lived next the Harlings. They had been farming people, like ourselves, and their place was like a little farm, with a big barn and a garden, and an orchard and grazing lots,—even a windmill. The Harlings were Norwegians, and Mrs. Harling had lived in Christiania until she was ten years old. Her husband was born in Minnesota. He was a grain merchant and cattle buyer, and was generally considered the most enterprising business man in our county. He controlled a line of grain elevators in the little towns along the railroad to the west of us, and was away from home a great deal. In his absence his wife was the head of the household.

Mrs. Harling was short and square and sturdy-looking, like her house. Every inch of her was charged with an energy that made itself felt the moment she entered a room. Her face was rosy and

solid, with bright, twinkling eyes and a stubborn little chin. She was quick to anger, quick to laughter, and jolly from the depths of her soul. How well I remember her laugh; it had in it the same sudden recognition that flashed into her eyes, was a burst of humor, short and intelligent. Her rapid footsteps shook her own floors, and she routed lassitude and indifference wherever she came. She could not be negative or perfunctory about anything. Her enthusiasm, and her violent likes and dislikes, asserted themselves in all the every-day occupations of life. Wash-day was interesting, never dreary, at the Harlings'. Preserving-time was a prolonged festival, and house-cleaning was like a revolution. When Mrs. Harling made garden that spring, we could feel the stir of her undertaking through the willow hedge that separated our place from hers.

*My Antonia*, 1918

## 15. Essie

RUTH SUCKOW

She made motions that . . . seemed almost crazily fantastic. And her appearance was almost as weird as her manner. Essie made her own clothes, and she still wore a modification of the waists and skirts of her girlhood. In her own feeling about herself, she could never permit herself to get really beyond that time. There was a fantastic, superannuated youthfulness now about her whole appearance. Gray had gradually encroached upon the whole mass of her hair, but she still wore the brown sidecombs and the great bone hairpins to match its remnants of faded color. Her old archness had changed from a mere slight silliness, at which "the young people" secretly laughed, into a weird exaggeration that to Jesse, in the clean youthfulness of his vision, was almost horrible in its contrast to the kind of starved, shining, fearful valiance he discerned in her eyes. But to Dorothy, although it was "sort of funny" and she was a little troubled, this was just Essie Bartlett. This manner was only the gradually developed, provincial accentuation of Essie's "way."

*The Folks*, 1934

# Episodes in the Great Valley

## 1. Girl Hunting

CAROLINE KIRKLAND

Lifting the sooty curtain with some timidity, I found [Dame Lowndes] with a sort of reel before her, trying to wind some dirty, tangled yarn; and ever and anon kicking at a basket which hung suspended from the beam overhead by means of a strip of hickory bark. This basket contained a nest of rags and an indescribable baby; and in the ashes on the rough hearth played several dingy objects, which I suppose had once been babies.

“Is your daughter at home now, Mrs. Lowndes?”

“Well, yes! M’randy’s to hum, but she’s out now. Did you want her?”

“I came to see if she could go to Mrs. Larkins, who is very unwell and sadly in want of help.”

“Miss Larkins! why, do tell! I want to know! Is she sick agin? and is her gal gone? Why! I want to know! I thought she had Lo-i-sy Paddon! Is Lo-i-sy gone?”

“I suppose so. You will let Miranda go to Mrs. Larkins, will you?”

“Well, I donnow but I would let her go for a spell, just to ’comodate ’em. M’randy may go if she’s a mind ter. She needn’t live out unless she chooses. She’s got a comfortable home, and no thanks to no-body. What wages do they give?”

“A dollar a week.”

“Eat at the table?”

“Oh! certainly.”

“Have Sundays?”

“Why no—I believe not the whole of Sunday—the children, you know—”

“Oh ho!” interrupted Mrs. Lowndes with a most disdainful toss of the head, giving at the same time a vigorous impulse to the cradle, “if that’s how it is, M’randy don’t stir a step! She don’t live nowhere if she can’t come home Saturday night and stay till Monday morning.” . . .

My next effort was at a pretty-looking cottage, whose overhanging roof and neat outer arrangements spoke of English ownership.

The interior by no means corresponded with the exterior aspect, being even more bare than usual and far from neat. The presiding power was a prodigious creature, who looked like a man in women's clothes and whose blazing face, ornamented here and there by great hair moles, spoke very intelligibly of the beer-barrel, if of nothing more exciting. A daughter of this virago had once lived in my family; and the mother met me with an air of defiance, as if she thought I had come with an accusation. When I unfolded my errand, her manner softened a little, but she scornfully rejected the idea of her Lucy's living with any more Yankees.

"You pretend to think everybody alike," said she, "but when it comes to the pint, you're a sight more uppish and saasy than the ra'al quality at home; and I'll see the whole Yankee race to—" . . .

So I passed on for another effort at Mrs. Randall's, whose three daughters had sometimes been known to lay aside their dignity long enough to obtain some much-coveted article of dress. Here the mop was in full play; and Mrs. Randall, with her gown turned up, was splashing diluted mud on the walls and furniture. . . . I did not venture in, but asked from the door, with my best diplomacy, whether Mrs. Randall *knew* of a girl.

"A gal! No; who wants a gal?"

"Mrs. Larkins."

"She! Why don't she get up and do her own work?"

"She is too feeble."

"Law sakes! too feeble! She'd be as able as anybody to thrash round, if her old man didn't spile her by waitin' on."

We think Mr. Larkins deserves small blame on this score.

"But, Mrs. Randall, the poor woman is really ill, and unable to do anything for her children. Couldn't you spare Rachel for a few days to help her?"

This was said in a most guarded and deprecatory tone, and with a manner carefully moulded between indifference and undue solicitude.

"My gals has got enough to do. They a'n't able to do their own work. Cur'line hasn't been worth the fust red cent for hard work ever since she went to school at Albion."

"Oh! I did not expect to get Caroline. I understand she is going to get married."

"What! to Bill Greene! She wouldn't let him walk where she walk'd last year!"

Here I saw I had made a misstep. Resolving to be more cautious, I left the selection to the lady herself, and only begged for one of

the girls. But my eloquence was wasted. The Miss Randalls had been a whole quarter at a select school and will not live out again until their present stock of finery is unwearable. Miss Rachel, whose company I had hoped to secure, was even then paying attention to a branch of the fine arts.

“Rachel Amandy!” cried Mrs. Randall at the foot of the ladder which gave access to the upper regions,—“fetch that thing down here. It’s the prettiest thing you ever see in your life!” turning to me. And the educated young lady brought down a doleful-looking compound of cardboard and many-coloured wafers, which had, it seems, occupied her mind and fingers for some days.

“There!” said the mother, proudly, “a gal that’s learnt to make sich baskets as that, a’n’t a goin’ to be nobody’s help, I guess!”

I thought the boast likely to be verified as a prediction, and went my way, crestfallen and weary. Girl-hunting is certainly among our most formidable “chores.”

“Half-Lengths from Life,” in *The Gift for 1844*

## 2. A Theater on the Ohio

SOL. SMITH

I have said the young men of the company who preceded us in our downward course were to display a flag as a signal to us whenever they had “taken a town.” One day we discovered a white handkerchief flying at the end of a pole on the river-bank, where there was not a house (much less a town) to be seen. We obeyed the signal and pulled to the shore. . . . Before we reached the land we were hailed from the top of a high bluff—“Halloo! the boat! Pull ashore; this is the town you are to stop at; your actors are up at my house waiting for you!” The person who spoke soon came down to us, and, sure enough, we found we were advertised to perform that same night at Lewiston. “Yes,” continued the man, whose name was Cartwright, “it’s all fixed—look at the bills posted on the trees—you’ll have a good house; the citizens are delighted with your visit.” . . . But no town could we see. “Oh, you are looking for the houses! Bless ye, they are not built yet; but we shall have some splendid buildings shortly. . . . Oh, Lewiston is destined to be a place.” Thus spoke our guide and landlord as he

drove his little wagon through the but partially cleared paths toward his house.

We arrived at length, and found our party very comfortably situated in a double log cabin, which was literally covered with playbills, which playbills most respectfully announced to the inhabitants of Lewiston and vicinity that Mr. Sol. Smith and his dramatic company would perform on such an evening the comic opera of the POOR SOLDIER, with the afterpiece of LOVERS' QUARRELS. I scarcely knew what to think of the whole proceeding. An audience seemed to me out of the question. Where they were to come from I could not imagine. "Come up and look at the theater," invitingly spoke the landlord, when he had introduced our wives to his wife. I followed him up stairs. "You see we have fitted up this room pretty neatly," said he—and so they had. The room was twelve by sixteen, and the scenery and curtain were rigged up in one end of it—while three large benches represented the boxes and pit. Whether it was all a joke, or whether the man was mad, I did not stop to inquire, for dinner was announced, and there was "no mistake" in that; it was a first-rate one. . . .

Dinner over, we soon found it was really expected we should play, for the audience began to assemble from every direction—the men and women all coming on horseback. An unexpected difficulty now presented itself—there was not a candle in the town—that is, in the house! What was to be done? Night was coming on; we could not act in the dark, that was certain. The landlord hit upon an expedient at last. He tore up some linen, of which he made wicks, and, rolling them in tallow, soon made six decent candles. He thereupon took half a dozen large potatoes, and, boring holes in them, converted them into candlesticks, placing them on the floor in front of the curtain for foot-lights! He next called his neighbors up to the bar by proclamation, and told them the box-office was open. In ten minutes they were all supplied with tickets (mostly on a credit), and he proceeded to open the doors—acting himself as door-keeper—informing all who entered that checks were not transferable, and no smoking was allowed in any part of the theater—"and, gentlemen, no admission behind the scenes under any pretense whatever!" When our audience was seated, he announced the fact to us, and admonished us that the curtain was advertised to rise at "eight o'clock precisely."

In our narrow quarters, a change of dress, after we once entered the theater, was not to be thought of—there was no getting to the dressing-rooms without passing among the auditors, there being

but one door to the room. So *Norah* and *Leonora*, being played by the same person, wore the same dress; and so with the other characters—*Patrick* and *Carlos*, *Darby* and *Sancho*, *Father Luke* and *Lopez*, *Kathleen* and *Jacinta*, etc. Mr. Cartwright was enthusiastic in his applause, declaring to his friends and neighbors that the performances were nearly equal to those at the Park—only in the latter establishment, he was free to admit, the scenery and decorations were a shade better than those of the Lewiston theater. The benches being all occupied, he squatted himself down by the potato foot-lights, and, at intervals, amused himself by snuffing the candles. At length, one by one, the lights began to give out, and we were in danger of being left in total darkness! Observing the state of affairs, I thought it time to bring the farce to a close, which I did by cutting *LOVERS' QUARRELS* rather short, reconciling the parties in the middle of the piece, and speaking the “tag.” Down came the curtain, and out went the last candle! The potatoes were all tenantless; so was the room in a few minutes, the auditors making their way down stairs the best way they could, highly delighted with their entertainment. Mr. Cartwright and his worthy wife soon raised a sort of lamp, constructed out of a piece of twisted linen and some hog’s lard in a saucer, and after listening to our landlord’s critical remarks on the whole performance and discussing an excellent supper, we retired for the night.

*Theatrical Management in the West and South, 1868*

### 3. Corner Lots

EDWARD EGGLESTON

Mr. Plausaby spread his “Map of Metropolisville” on the table, let his hand slip gently down past the “Depôt Ground” so that the fat gentleman saw it without seeming to have had his attention called to it; then Plausaby, Esq., looked meditatively at the ground set apart for “College” and seemed to be making a mental calculation. Then Plausaby proceeded to unfold the many advantages of the place, and Albert was a pleased listener; he had never before suspected that Metropolisville had prospects so entirely dazzling. He could not doubt the statements of the bland Plausaby, who said these things in a confidential and reserved way to the fat gentleman. Charlton did not understand but Plausaby did, that what is

told in a corner to a fat gentleman with curly hair and a hopeful nose is sure to be repeated from the house-tops.

"You are an Episcopalian, I believe?" said Plausaby, Esq. The fat gentleman replied that he was a Baptist.

"Oh! well, I might have known it from your cordial way of talking. Baptist myself, in principle. In principle, at least. Not a member of any church, sorry to say. Very sorry. My mother and my first wife were both Baptists. Both of them. I have a very warm side for the good old Baptist church. Very warm side. And a warm side for every Baptist. Every Baptist. To say nothing of the feeling I have always had for you—well, well, let us not pass compliments. Business is business in this country. In this country, you know. But I will tell *you* one thing. The lot there marked 'College' I am just about transferring to trustees for a Baptist university. There are two or three parties, members of Dr. Armitage's church in New York City, that are going to give us a hundred thousand dollars endowment. A hundred thousand dollars. Don't say anything about it. There are people who—well, who would spoil the thing if they could. We have neighbors, you know. Not very friendly ones. Not very friendly. Perritaut, for instance. It isn't best to tell one's neighbor all one's good luck. Not all one's good luck," and Plausaby, Esq., smiled knowingly at the fat man, who did his best to screw his very transparent face into a crafty smile in return. "Besides," continued Squire Plausaby, "once let it get out that the Baptist University is going to occupy that block, and there'll be a great demand—"

"For all the blocks around," said the eager fat gentleman, growing impatient at Plausaby's long-windedness.

"Precisely. For all the blocks around," went on Plausaby. "And I want to hold on to as much of the property in this quarter as—"

"As you can, of course," said the other.

"As I can, of course. As much as I can, of course. But I'd like to have you interested. You are a man of influence. A man of weight. Of weight of character. You will bring other Baptists. And the more Baptists, the better for—the better for—"

"For the college, of course."

"Exactly. Precisely. For the college, of course. The more, the better. And I should like your name on the board of trustees of—of—"

"The college?"

"The university, of course. I should like your name."

The fat gentleman was pleased at the prospect of owning land

near the Baptist University, and doubly pleased at the prospect of seeing his name in print as one of the guardians of the destiny of the infant institution. He thought he would like to buy half of block 26.

“Well, no. I couldn’t sell in 26 to you or any man. Couldn’t sell to any man. I want to hold that block because of its slope. I’ll sell in 28 *to you*, and the lots there are just about as good. Quite as good. Quite as good, indeed. But I want to build on 26.”

The fat gentleman declared that he wouldn’t have anything but lots in 26. That block suited his fancy, and he didn’t care to buy if he could not have a pick.

“Well, you’re an experienced buyer, I see,” said Plausaby, Esq. “An experienced buyer. Any other man would have preferred 28 to 26. But you’re a little hard to insist on that particular block. I want you here, and I’ll give you half of 28 rather than sell you out of 26.”

“Well, now, my friend, I am sorry to seem hard. But I fastened my eye on 26. I have a fine eye for direction and distance. One, two, three, four blocks from the public square. That’s the block with the solitary oak-tree in it, if I’m right. Yes? Well, I must have lots in that very block. When I take a whim of that kind, heaven and earth can’t turn me, Mr. Plausaby. So you’d just as well let me have them.”

Plausaby, Esq., at last concluded that he would sell to the plump gentleman any part of block 26 except the two lots on the south-east corner. But that gentleman said that those were the very two he had fixed his eyes upon. . . . He always took his very pick out of each town.

“Well,” said Mr. Plausaby coaxingly, “you see I have selected those two lots for my step-daughter. For little Katy. She is going to get married next spring, I suppose, and I have promised her the two best in the town, and I had marked off these two. Marked them off for her. I’ll sell you lots alongside, nearly as good, for half-price. Just half-price.”

But the fat gentleman was inexorable. Mr. Plausaby complained that the fat gentleman was hard, and the fat gentleman was pleased with the compliment. Having been frequently lectured by his wife for being so easy and gullible, he was now eager to believe himself a very Shylock. Did not like to rob little Kate of her marriage portion, he said, but he must have the best or none. He wanted the whole south half of 26.

And so Mr. Plausaby sold him the corner-lot and the one next to

it for ever so much more than their value, pathetically remarking that he'd have to hunt up some other lots for Kate. And then Mr. Plausaby took the fat gentleman out and showed him the identical corner, with the little oak and the slope to the south.

*The Mystery of Metropolisville, 1873*

## 4. Among the Free Lovers

ARTEMUS WARD

Some years ago I pitched my tent and onfurled my banner to the breeze in Berlin Hites, Ohio. I had hearn that Berlin Hites was ockepied by a extensive seck called Free Lovers, who beleaved in affinertys and sich, goin back on their domestic ties without no hesitation whatsoever. They was likewise spirit rappers and high-presher reformers on ginerall principles. If I can improve these 'ere misgided peple by showin them my onparalleld show at the usual low price of admitants, methunk, I shall not hav lived in vane! But bitterly did I cuss the day I ever sot foot in the retchid place. I sot up my tent in a field near the Love Cure, as they called it, and bimeby the free lovers begun for to congregate around the door. A ornreer set I have never sawn. The men's faces was all covered with hare, and they lookt half-starved to deth. They didn't wear no weskuts, for the purpuss (as they sed) of allowin the free air of hevun to blow onto their buzzums. Their pockets was filled with tracks and pamplits, and they was bare-footed. They sed the Postles didn't wear boots, & why should they? That was their stile of argyment. The wimin was wuss than the men. They wore trowsis, short gownds, straw hats with green ribbins, and all carried bloo cotton umbrellers.

Presently a perfectly orful lookin female presented herself at the door. Her gownd was skanderlusly short, and her trowsis was shameful to behold.

She eyed me over very sharp, and then startin back she sed, in a wild voice:

"Ah, can it be?"

"Which?" said I.

"Yes, 'tis troo, O 'tis troo!"

"15 cents, marm," I anserd.

She bust out a cryin & sed:

"And so I hav found you at larst—at larst, O at larst!"

"Yes," I anserd, "you have found me at larst, and you would have found me at fust, if you had cum sooner."

She grabd me vilently by the coat collar, and brandishin her umbreller wildly round, exclaimed:

"Air you a man?"

Sez I, "I think I air, but if you doubt it, you can address Mrs. A. Ward, Baldinsville, Injianny, postage pade, & she will probly giv you the desired informashun."

"Then thou ist what the cold world calls marrid?"

"Madam, I istest!"

The exsentric female then clutched me frantically by the arm and hollerd:

"You air mine, O you air mine!"

"Scacely," I sed, endevertin to git loose from her. But she clung to me and sed:

"You air my Affinerty!"

"What upon arth is that?" I shouted.

"Dost thou not know?"

"No, I dostent!"

"Listin, man, & I'll tell ye!" sed the strange female; "for years I hav yearned for thee. I knowd thou wast in the world, sumwhares, tho I didn't know whare. My hart sed he would cum and I took courage. He *has* cum—he's here—you air him—you air my Affinerty! O 'tis too mutch! too mutch!" and she sobbed agin.

"Yes," I anserd, "I think it is a darn site too mutch!"

"Hast thou not yearned for me?" she yelled, ringin her hands like a female play acter.

"Not a yearn!" I bellerd at the top of my voice, throwin her away from me.

The free lovers who was standin roun obsarvin the scene comenst for to holler "shame!" "beast!" etsettery, etsettery.

I was very much riled, and fortifyin myself with a spare tent stake, I addrest them as follers: "You pussylanermus critters, go way from me and take this retchid woman with you. I'm a law-abidin man, and bleeve in good, old-fashioned institutions. I'm marrid & my orfsprings resemble me, if I am a showman. I think your Affinity bizniss is cussed noncents, besides bein outrajusly wicked. Why don't you behave desunt like other folks? Go to work and earn a honist livin, and not stay round here in this lazy, shiftless way, pizenin the moral atmosphere with your pestifrous idees! You wimin folks, go back to your lawful husbands if you've got

any, and take orf them skanderlous gownds and trowsis, and dress respectful, like other wimin. You men folks, cut orf them pirattercal whiskers, burn up them infurnel pamplits, put sum weskuts on, go to work choppin wood, splittin fence rales, or tillin the sile." I pored 4th my indignashun in this way till I got out of breth, when I stopt. I shant go to Berlin Hites agin, not if I live to be as old as Methooseler.

*Artemus Ward: His Book, 1862*

## 5. Hallowe'en

SHERWOOD ANDERSON

It was the custom among the lads of our town, particularly among those who lived on the farms near town, to make cabbages part of their celebration of [Hallowe'en]. Such lads, living as they did in the country, had the use of horses and buggies, and on Hallowe'en they hitched up and drove off to town.

On the way they stopped at the cabbage fields and, finding in some of the fields many cabbages yet uncut, pulled them out by the roots and piled them in the backs of their buggies.

The country lads, giggling with anticipated pleasure, drove into one of the quieter residence streets of our town and, leaving the horse standing in the road, one of them got out of the buggy and took one of the cabbages in his hand. The cabbage had been pulled out of the ground with the great stalklike root still clinging to it and the lad now grasped this firmly. He crept toward one of the houses, preferably one that was dark—an indication that the people of the house, having spent a hard day at labor, had already gone to bed. Approaching the house cautiously, he swung the cabbage above his head, holding it by the long stalk, and then he let it go. The thing was to just hurl the cabbage full against the closed door of the house. It struck with a thunderous sound and the supposition was that the people of the house would be startled and fairly lifted out of their beds by the hollow booming noise, produced when the head of cabbage landed against the door and, as a matter of fact, when a stout country boy had hurled the cabbage the sound produced was something quite tremendous.

The cabbage having been thrown the country boy ran quickly into the road, leaped into his buggy and, striking his horse with

the whip, drove triumphantly away. He was not likely to return unless pursued, and there it was that mother's strategy came into play.

On the great night she made us all sit quietly in the house. As soon as the evening meal was finished the lights were put out and we waited while mother stood just at the door, the knob in her hand. No doubt it must have seemed strange to the boys of our town that one so gentle and quiet as mother could be so infuriated by the hurling of a cabbage at the door of our house.

But there was the simple fact of the situation to tempt and darkness had no sooner settled down upon our quiet street than one of the lads appeared. It was worth while throwing cabbages at such a house. One was pursued, one was scolded, threats were hurled: "Don't you dare come back to this house! I'll have the town marshal after you, that's what I'll do! If I get my hands on one of you I'll give you a drubbing!" There was something of the actor in mother also.

What a night for the lads! Here was something worth while and all evening the game went on and on. The buggies were not driven to our house, but were stopped at the head of the street, and town boys went on pilgrimages to cabbage fields to get ammunition and join in the siege. Mother stormed, scolded, and ran out into the darkness waving a broom while we children stayed indoors, enjoying the battle—and when the evening's sport was at an end, we all fell to and gathered in the spoils. As she returned from each sally from the fort mother had brought into the house the last cabbage thrown—if she could find it; and now, late in the evening when our provident tormentors were all gone, we children went forth with a lantern and got in the rest of our crop. Often as many as two or three hundred cabbages came our way and these were all carefully gathered in. They had been pulled from the ground, with all the heavy outer leaves still clinging to them, so that they were comparatively uninjured and, as there was also still attached to them the heavy stalklike root, they were in fine shape to be kept. A long trench was dug in our back yard and the cabbages buried, lying closely side by side, as I am told the dead are usually buried after a siege.

Perhaps indeed we were somewhat more careful with them than soldiers are with their dead after a battle. Were not the cabbages to be, for us, the givers of life? They were put into the trench carefully and tenderly with the heads downward and the stalks sticking up, mother supervising, and about each head straw was

carefully packed—winding sheets. One could get straw from a straw-stack in a near-by field at night, any amount of it, and one did not pay or even bother to ask.

When winter came quickly, as it did after Hallowe'en, mother got small white beans from the grocery and salt pork from the butcher, and a thick soup, of which we never tired, was concocted. The cabbages were something at our backs. They made us feel safe.

*A Story Teller's Story, 1924*

## 6. First Blood

ROBERT HERRICK

I was getting only twenty dollars a week, and no rosy prospects. My little schemes of making sausages on a large scale and kosher meat had been turned down. I stowed them away in my mind for future use. Meantime, after working at the Yards for nearly two years, I had managed to lay by about a thousand dollars, what with my savings when I was at the Enterprise. That thousand dollars was in a savings-bank downtown, and it made me restless to think that it was drawing only three and a half per cent, when chances to make big money were going by me all the time just out of my grasp. I kept turning over and over in my mind how I might use that thousand and make it breed money. There were lively times then on the Board of Trade. Nothing much was done in the stock market in Chicago in those early days, but when a man wanted to take his flyer he went into pork or grain. I used to hear more or less about what was being done on the Board of Trade from Dick Pierson, who had been promoted from scrubbing blackboards to a little clerkship in the same office, which operated on the Board.

Dick had grown to be a sallow-faced, black-mustached youth who had his sisters' knack of smart dressing, and a good deal of mouth. He was always talking of the deals the big fellows were carrying, and how this man made fifty thousand dollars going short on lard and that man had his all taken away from him in the wheat pit. He was full of tips that he had picked up in his office—always fingering the dice, so to speak, but without the cash to make a throw. Dick knew that I had some money in the bank, and he was ever at me to put it up on some deal on margin. Slocum used to chaff him about his tips, and I didn't take his talk very

seriously. It was along in the early summer of my third year at Dround's when Dick began to talk about the big deal Strauss was running in pork. Pork was going to twenty dollars a barrel, sure. According to Dick, all any one had to do to make a fortune was to get on the train now. This time his talk made some impression on me; for the boys were saying the same thing over in the office at the Yards. I thought of asking Carmichael about it, but I suspected John might lie to me and laugh to see the "kid" robbed. So I said nothing, but every time I had occasion to go by the bank where I kept my money it seemed to call out to me to do something. And I was hot to do something! I had about made up my mind after turning it over for several weeks, to make my venture in Strauss's corner. Pork was then selling about seventeen dollars a barrel, and there was talk of its going as high as twenty-five dollars by the October delivery.

It happened that the very day I made up my mind to go down to the city and draw out my money I was in the manager's office talking to him about one of our small customers. Carmichael was opening his mail and listening to me. He would rip up an envelope and throw it down on his desk, then let the letter slide out of his fat hand, and pick up another. I saw him grab one letter in a hurry. On the envelope, which was plain, was printed JOHN CARMICHAEL in large letters. As he tore open the enclosure I could see that it was a broker's form, and printed in fat capitals beneath the firm name was the word SOLD, and after it a written item that looked like pork. As Carmichael shoved this slip of paper back in the envelope I took another look and was sure it was pork. I went out of the office thinking to myself: "Carmichael isn't buying any pork this trip: he's selling. What does that mean?"

As I have said, the manager had charge of those private agreements with which the trade was kept together. In this way he came in contact with all our rivals, and among them the great Strauss. After thinking for a time, it was clear to me that the Irishman had some safe inside information about this deal which Dick did not have, nor any one else on the street. That afternoon when I could get off I went down to the bank and drew my money. At first I thought I would take five hundred dollars and have something left in the bank in case I was wrong on my guess. But the nearer I got to the bank the keener I was to make all I could. I took the thousand and hurried over to the office on La Salle Street, where Dick worked. I beckoned him out of the crowd in front of the board and shoved my bunch of money into his hand.

"I want you to sell a thousand barrels of pork for me," I said.

"Gee!" Dick whistled, "you've got nerve. What makes you want to go short of pork?"

"Never you mind," I said; "go on and tell your boss to sell, and there's your margin."

"I'll have to speak to the old man himself about this," Dick replied soberly. "This ain't any market to fool with."

"Well, if he don't want the business there are others."

Dick disappeared into the back office, and I had to wait some time. Presently a fat little smooth-shaven man shoved his head through the door and looked me over for a moment with a grin on his face. I suppose he thought me crazy, but he didn't object to taking my money all the same.

"All right," he called out with another grin, "we'll take his deal." And Dick came out from the door and told me in a big voice:—

"All right, old man! We sell a thousand for you."

When I got out into the street I wasn't as sure of what I had done as I had been when I went into the broker's office; but I had too much nerve to admit that I wished I had my money back in my fist. And I kept my courage the next week, while pork hung just about where it was or maybe went up a few cents. Then it began to slide back just a little—\$16.87½, \$16.85, \$16.80, were the quotations—and so on until it reached \$16.50, where it hung for a week. Then it took up its retreat again until it had slid to an even \$16. Dick, who congratulated me on my luck, advised me to sell and be content with doubling my money. Strauss was just playing with the street, he said. This was only the end of August: by the middle of September there would be a procession. But my head was set. To be sure, when, after the first of September, pork began to climb, I rather wished I had been content with doubling my money. But I pinned my faith on Carmichael. I didn't believe he was selling yet. For a fortnight at the close of September, pork hung about \$16.37½, with little variation either way. Then the last three days of the month, as the time for October deliveries drew near, it began to sag and dropped to \$16.10. I hung on.

It was well for me that I did. October first Strauss began delivering, and he poured pork into the market by the thousand barrels. Pork dropped, shot down, and touched \$13. One morning I called at the broker's office and gave the order to buy. I had cleared four thousand dollars in my deal.

It was first blood!

*The Memoirs of an American Citizen, 1905*

# *Payton Skah: An Indian Tale*

WILLIAM JOSEPH SNELLING

We have before intimated that we cannot pretend to much accuracy with regard to dates. So we are not certain that the events we are about to relate did not happen five centuries ago, perhaps more; but it is probable that the time was not so remote. Be that as it may, we shall give the facts in the same order in which tradition hands them down.

The Dahcotahs were at war with the Mandans. Many were the onslaughts they made on each other, and long were they remembered. Among the Sioux warriors who struck the post and took the war path, none was more conspicuous than Payton Skah or the White Otter. He belonged to the Yankton band. When he returned from the field with his head crowned with laurels or more properly with his bridle rein adorned with Mandan scalps, the seniors of the tribe pointed to him and exhorted their sons to ride, to draw the bow, and to strike the enemy like Payton Skah.

Payton Skah was a husband and a father. As soon as he was reckoned a man and able to support a family, he had taken to his bosom the young and graceful Tahtokah (The Antelope), thought to be the best hand at skinning the buffalo, making moccasins, whitening leather, and preparing marrow fat in the tribe. She was not, as is common among the Dahcotahs, carried an unwilling or indifferent bride to her husband's lodge. No, he had lighted his match in her father's tent and held it before her eyes, and she had blown it out, as instigated by love to do. And when he had espoused her in form, her affection did not diminish. She never grumbled at pulling off his leggins and moccasins when he returned from the chase nor at drying and rubbing them till they became soft and pliant. A greater proof of her regard was that she was strictly obedient to her mother in law. And Payton Skah's attachment, though his endearments were reserved for their private hours, was not less than hers. No woman in the camp could show more wampum and other ornaments than the wife of the young warrior. He was even several times known, when she had been to bring home the meat procured by his arrows, to relieve her of a part of the burthen by taking it upon his own manly shoulders. In due time, she gave him a son; a sure token that however many more

wives he might see proper to take, he would never put her away. The boy was the idol of his old grandmother, who could never suffer him out of her sight a moment and used constantly to prophesy that he would become a brave warrior and an expert horse stealer; a prediction that his manhood abundantly verified.

In little more than a year the youngster was able to walk erect. About this time the band began to feel the approach of famine. Buffaloes were supposed to abound on the river Des Moines, and thither Payton Skah resolved to go. His mother had cut her foot while chopping wood and was unable to travel; but she would not part with her grandchild. Tahtokah unwillingly consented to leave her boy behind, at the request of her husband. . . . One other family accompanied them. They soon reached the Des Moines and encamped on its banks. Many wild cattle were killed, and much of their flesh was cured. The young wife now reminded her spouse that his mother must by this time be able to walk and that she longed to see her child. In compliance with her wishes he mounted his horse and departed, resolved to bring the rest of the band to the land of plenty.

At his arrival, his compatriots on his representations packed up their baggage and threw down their lodges. A few days brought them to where he had left his wife and her companions. But the place was desolate. No voice hailed their approach; no welcome greeted their arrival. The lodges were cut to ribbons, and a bloody trail marked where the bodies of their inmates had been dragged into the river. Following the course of the stream, the corpses of all but Tahtokah were found on the shores and sand-bars. Hers was missing, but this gave her husband no consolation. He knew that neither Sioux nor Mandans spared sex or age and supposed it to be sunk in some eddy of the river. And Mandans, the marks [which] the spoilers had left behind them proved them to be.

Now Payton Skah was, for an Indian, a kind and affectionate husband. The Sioux mothers wished their daughters might obtain partners like him; and it was proverbial to say of a fond couple that they loved like Payton Skah and Tahtokah. Yet on this occasion, whatever his feelings might have been, he uttered no sigh, he shed no tear. But he gave what was, in the eyes of his mates, a more honorable proof of his grief. He vowed that he would not take another wife nor cut his hair, till he had killed and scalped five Mandans. And he filled his quiver, saddled his horse, and raised the war song immediately. He found followers and departed

incontinently. At his return but three obstacles to his second marriage remained to be overcome.

In the course of the year he fulfilled the conditions of his vow. The five scalps were hanging in the smoke of his lodge, but he evinced no inclination towards matrimony. On the contrary, his countenance was sorrowful, he pined away, and every one thought he was in a consumption. His mother knew his disposition better. Thinking, not unwisely, that the best way to drive the old love out of his head was to provide him a new one, she with true female perseverance compelled him by teasing and clamor to do as she wished.

So the old woman selected Chuntay Washtay (The Good Heart) for her son and demanded her of her parents, who were not sorry to form such a connection. The bride elect herself showed no alacrity in the matter; but this was too common a thing to excite any surprise or comment. She was formally made over to Payton Skah and duly installed in his lodge.

He was not formed by nature to be alone. Notwithstanding the contempt an Indian education inculcates for the fair sex, he was as sensible to female blandishments as a man could be. Though his new wife was by no means so kind as the old one, . . . she fulfilled the duties of her station with all apparent decorum, [and] he began to be attached to her. His health improved, he was again heard to laugh, and he hunted the buffalo with as much vigor as ever. Yet when Chuntay Washtay, as she sometimes would, raised her voice higher than was consistent with conjugal affection, he would think of his lost Tahtokah and struggle to keep down the rising sigh.

A young Yankton who had asked Chuntay Washtay of her parents previous to her marriage, and who had been rejected by them, now became a constant visitor in her husband's lodge. He came early and staid and smoked late. But as Payton Skah saw no appearance of regard for the youth in his wife, he felt no uneasiness. If he had seen what was passing in her mind, he would have scorned to exhibit any jealousy. He would have proved by his demeanor that his heart was strong. He was destined ere long to be more enlightened on this point.

His mother was gone with his child on a visit to a neighboring camp, and he was left alone with his wife. It was reported that buffaloes were to be found at a little oasis in the prairie, at about the distance of a day's journey, and Chuntay Washtay desired him to go and kill one and hang its flesh up in a tree out of the

reach of the wolves. "You cannot get back to night," she said, "but you can make a fire and sleep by it, and return tomorrow. If fat cows are to be found there we will take down our lodge and move."

The White Otter did as he was desired. His wife brought his beautiful black horse, which he had selected and stolen from a drove near the Mandan village, to the door of the lodge. He threw himself on its back and having listened to her entreaties that he would be back soon, rode away.

His gallant steed carried him to the place of his destination with the speed of the wind. The buffaloes were plenty, and in the space of two hours he had killed and cut up two of them. Having hung the meat upon the branches, he concluded that, as he had got some hours of daylight, he would return to his wife. He applied the lash and arrived at the camp at midnight.

He picketed his horse carefully and bent his way to his own lodge. All was silent within, and the dogs, scenting their master, gave no alarm. He took up a handful of dry twigs outside the door and entered. Raking open the coals in the center of the lodge he laid on the fuel, which presently blazed and gave a bright light. By its aid he discovered a spectacle that drove the blood from his heart into his face. There lay Chantay Washtay, fast asleep by the side of her quondam lover. Payton Skah unsheathed his knife and stood for a moment irresolute; but his better feelings prevailing, he returned it to its place in his belt and left the lodge without awakening them. Going to another place he laid himself down, but not to sleep.

But when the east began to be streaked with grey, he brought his horse, his favorite steed, to the door of the tent. Just as he reached it those within awoke, and the paramour of Chantay Washtay came forth and stood before him. He stood still. Fear of the famous hunter and renowned warrior kept him silent. Payton Skah in a stern voice commanded him to re-enter; and when he had obeyed followed him in. The guilty wife spoke not, but covered her face with her hands, till her husband directed her to light a fire and prepare food. She then rose and hung the earthen utensil over the fire, and the repast was soon ready. At the command of Payton Skah she placed a wooden platter or bowl before him and another for his unwilling guest. This last had now arrived at the conclusion that he was to die and had screwed up his courage to meet his fate with the unshrinking fortitude of an Indian warrior. He ate, therefore, in silence but without any sign of concern. When the repast was ended Payton Skah produced his pipe, filled the bowl with

tobacco mixed with the inner bark of the red willow and, after smoking a few whiffs himself, gave it to the culprit. Having passed from one to the other till it was finished, the aggrieved husband ordered his wife to produce her clothing and effects and pack them up in a bundle. This done he rose to speak.

“Another in my place,” he said to the young man, “had he detected you as I did last night, would have driven an arrow through you before you awoke. But my heart is strong, and I have hold of the heart of Chantay Washtay. You sought her before I did, and I see she would rather be your companion than mine. She is yours; and that you may be able to support her, take my horse, and my bow and arrows also. Take her and depart, and let peace be between us.”

At this speech the wife, who had been trembling lest her nose should be cut off, and her lover, who had expected nothing less than death, recovered their assurance and left the lodge. Payton Skah remained, and, while the whole band was singing his generosity, brooded over his misfortunes in sadness and silence.

Notwithstanding his boast of the firmness of his resolution, his mind was nearly unsettled by the shock. He had set his whole heart upon Tahtokah, and when the wound occasioned by her loss was healed, he had loved Chantay Washtay with all his might. . . .

Though one of the bravest of men, his heart was as soft as a woman's, in spite of precept and example. At this second blight of his affections, he fell into a settled melancholy; and one or two unsuccessful hunts convinced him that he was a doomed man, an object of the displeasure of God, and that he need never more look for any good fortune. A post dance, at which the performers alternately sung their exploits, brought this morbid state of feeling to a crisis. Like the rest, he recounted the deeds he had done and declared that to expiate the involuntary offense he had committed against the Great Spirit, he would go to the Mandan village and throw away his body. All expostulation was vain; and the next morning he started on foot and alone to put his purpose in execution.

He travelled onward with a heavy heart, and the eighth evening found him on the bank of the Missouri, opposite the Mandan village. He swam the river, and saw the lights shine through the crevices, and heard the dogs bark at his approach. Nothing dismayed, he entered the village, and promenaded through it two or three times. He saw no man abroad and, impatient of delay, entered the principal lodge. Within he found two women, who spoke to him; but he did not answer. He threw his robe over his

face and sat down in a dark corner, intending to await the entrance of some warrior by whose hands he might honorably die. The women addressed him repeatedly but could not draw from him any reply. Finding him impenetrable, they took no further notice but continued their conversation as if no one had been present. Had they known to what tribe he belonged they would have fled in terror; but they supposed him to be a Mandan. He gathered from it that the men of the village were all gone to the buffalo hunt and would not return till morning. Most of the females were with them. Here then, was an opportunity to wreak his vengeance on the tribe such as had never before occurred and would probably never occur again. But he refrained in spite of his Indian nature. He had not come to kill any one as on former occasions but to lay down his own life; and he remained constant in his resolution.

If it be asked why the Mandans left their village in this defenceless condition, we answer that Indian camps are frequently left in the same manner. Perhaps they relied on the broad and rapid river to keep off any roving band of Dahcotahs that might come thither. Payton Skah sat in the lodge of his enemies till the tramp of a horse on the frozen earth and the jingling of the little bells round his neck announced that a warrior had returned from the hunt. Then the White Otter prepared to go to whatever lodge the Mandan might enter and die by his arrows or tomahawk. But he had no occasion to stir. The horseman rode straight to the lodge in which he sat, dismounted, threw his bridle to a squaw, and entered. The women pointed to their silent guest and related how unaccountably he had behaved. The new comer turned to Payton Skah and asked who and what he was. Then the Yankton, like Caius Marcius within the walls of Corioli, rose, threw off his robe, and drawing himself up with great dignity, bared his breast and spoke. "I am a man. Of that, Mandan, be assured. Nay, more: I am a Dahcotah, and my name is Payton Skah. You have heard it before. I have lost friends and kin by the arrows of your people, and well have I revenged them. See, on my head I wear ten feathers of the war eagle. Now it is the will of the Master of life that I should die, and to that purpose came I hither. Strike therefore, and rid your tribe of the greatest enemy it ever had."

Courage, among the aborigines as charity among Christians, covereth a multitude of sins. The Mandan warrior cast on his undaunted foe a look in which respect, delight, and admiration were blended. He raised his war club as if about to strike, but the Sioux blenched not; not a nerve trembled—his eyelids did not quiver.

The weapon dropped from the hand that held it. The Mandan tore open his own vestment, and said, "No, I will not kill so brave a man. But I will prove that my people are men also. I will not be outdone in generosity. Strike thou; then take my horse and fly."

The Sioux declined the offer and insisted upon being himself the victim. The Mandan was equally pertinacious; and this singular dispute lasted till the latter at last held out his hand in token of amity. He commanded the women to prepare a feast, and the two generous foes sat down and smoked together. The brave of the Missouri accounted for speaking the Dahcotah tongue by saying that he was himself half a Sioux. His mother had belonged to that tribe and so did his wife, having both been made prisoners. In the morning Payton Skah should see and converse with them. And the Yankton proffered, since it did not appear to be the will of the Great Spirit that he should die, to become the instrument to bring about a firm and lasting peace between the two nations.

In the morning the rest of the band arrived and were informed what visitor was in the village. The women screamed with rage and cried for revenge. The men grasped their weapons and rushed tumultuously to the lodge to obtain it. A great clamor ensued. The Mandan stood before the door, declaring that he would guarantee the rights of hospitality with his life. His resolute demeanor, as well as the bow and war club he held ready to make his words good, made the impression he desired. The Mandans recoiled, consulted, and . . . decided that Payton Skah must be carried as a prisoner to the council lodge, there to abide the result of their deliberations.

Payton Skah, indifferent to whatever might befall him, walked proudly to the place appointed in the midst of a guard of Mandans. . . . The preliminary of smoking over, the consultation did not last long. His new friend related how the prisoner had entered the village, alone and unarmed save with his knife; how he had magnanimously spared the women and children when at his mercy; and how he had offered to negotiate a peace between the two tribes. Admiration of his valor overcame the hostility of the Mandans. Their hatred vanished like snow before the sun; and it was carried by acclamation that he should be treated as became an Indian brave and dismissed in safety and with honor.

At this stage of proceedings a woman rushed into the lodge, broke through the circle of stern and armed warriors, and threw herself into the arms of the Dahcotah hero. It was Tahtokah, his first, his best beloved! He did not return her caresses, [for] that would have

derogated from his dignity; but he asked her how she had escaped from the general slaughter at the Des Moines, and who was her present husband.

She pointed to the Mandan to whom he had offered his breast. He it was, she said, who had spared her and subsequently taken her to wife. He now advanced and proposed to Payton Skah to become his *kodali*, or comrade, and to receive his wife back again; two propositions to which [he] gladly assented. For according to the customs of the Dahcotahs, a wife may be lent to one's kodah without any impropriety.

The Mandans devoted five days to feasting the gallant Yankton. At the end of that time he departed with his recovered wife, taking with him three horses laden with robes and other gifts bestowed on him by his late enemies. His kodah accompanied him half way on his return, . . . and at parting received his promise that he would soon return. We leave our readers to imagine the joy of Tahtokah at seeing her child again on her arrival among the Sioux, as well as the satisfaction of the tribe at hearing that its best man had returned from his perilous excursion alive and unhurt. In less than two months, Payton Skah was again among the Mandans with six followers, who were hospitably received and entertained. An equal number of Mandans accompanied them on their return home, where they experienced like treatment. As the intercourse between the tribes became more frequent, hostilities were discontinued; and the feelings that prompted them were in time forgotten. The peace brought about as above related has continued without interruption to this day. As to Payton Skah, he recovered his health and spirits, was successful in war and the chase, and was finally convinced that the curse of the Almighty had departed from him.

*Tales of the Northwest, 1830*

# Spelling Down the Master

EDWARD EGGLESTON

Every family furnished a candle. There were yellow dips and white dips, burning, smoking, and flaring. There was laughing, and talking, and giggling, and simpering, and ogling, and flirting, and courting. What a full-dress party is to Fifth Avenue, a spelling-school is to Hoopole County. It is an occasion which is metaphorically inscribed with this legend: "Choose your partners." Spelling is only a blind in Hoopole County, [Indiana,] as is dancing on Fifth Avenue. But as there are some in society who love dancing for its own sake, so in Flat Creek district there were those who loved spelling for its own sake and who, smelling the battle from afar, had come to try their skill in this tournament, hoping to freshen the laurels they had won in their school-days.

"I 'low," said Mr. Means, speaking as the principal school trustee, "I 'low our friend the Square is jest the man to boss this 'ere consarn to-night. Ef nobody objects, I'll app'int him. Come, Square, don't be bashful. Walk up to the trough, fodder or no fodder, as the man said to his donkey."

There was a general giggle at this, and many of the young swains took occasion to nudge the girls alongside them, ostensibly for the purpose of making them see the joke but really for the pure pleasure of nudging. The Greeks figured Cupid as naked, probably because he wears so many disguises that they could not select a costume for him.

The Squire came to the front. Ralph made an inventory of the agglomeration which bore the name of Squire Hawkins, as follows:

1. A swallow-tail coat of indefinite age, worn only on state occasions, when its owner was called to figure in his public capacity. Either the Squire had grown too large or the coat too small.

2. A pair of black gloves, the most phenomenal, abnormal, and unexpected apparition conceivable in Flat Creek district, where the preachers wore no coats in the summer, and where a black glove was never seen except on the hands of the Squire.

3. A wig of that dirty, waxen color so common to wigs. This one showed a continual inclination to slip off the owner's smooth, bald pate, and the Squire had frequently to adjust it. As his hair had been red, the wig did not accord with his face, and the hair un-

grayed was doubly discordant with a countenance shrivelled by age.

4. A semicircular row of whiskers hedging the edge of the jaw and chin. These were dyed a frightful dead-black, such a color as belonged to no natural hair or beard that ever existed. At the roots there was a quarter of an inch of white, giving the whiskers the appearance of having been stuck on.

5. A pair of spectacles with tortoise-shell rim. Wont to slip off.

6. A glass eye, purchased of a peddler, and differing in color from its natural mate, perpetually getting out of focus by turning in or out.

7. A set of false teeth, badly fitted, and given to bobbing up and down.

8. The Squire proper, to whom these patches were loosely attached.

It is an old story that a boy wrote home to his father begging him to come West, because "mighty mean men get into office out here." But Ralph concluded that some Yankees had taught school in Hoopole County who would not have held a high place in the educational institutions of Massachusetts. Hawkins had some New England idioms, but they were well overlaid by a Western pronunciation.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began, shoving up his spectacles and sucking his lips over his white teeth to keep them in place, "ladies and gentlemen, young men and maidens, raley I'm obleeged to Mr. Means fer this honor;" and the Squire took both hands and turned the top of his head round half an inch. Then he adjusted his spectacles. Whether he was obliged to Mr. Means for the honor of being compared to a donkey was not clear. "I feel in the inmost compartments of my animal spirits a most happifying sense of the success and futility of all my endeavors to sarve the people of Flat Creek deestrick and the people of Tomkins township, in my weak way and manner." This burst of eloquence was delivered with a constrained air and an apparent sense of a danger that he, Squire Hawkins, might fall to pieces in his weak way and manner. . . . For by this time the ghastly pupil of the left eye, which was black, was looking away round to the left, while the little blue one on the right twinkled cheerfully toward the front. The front teeth would drop down so that the Squire's mouth was kept nearly closed, and his words whistled through.

"I feel as if I could be grandiloquent on this interesting occasion," twisting his scalp round, "but raley I must forego any such exertions. It is spelling you want. Spelling is the corner-stone, the grand,

underlying subterfuge, of a good eddication. I put the spellin'-book prepared by the great Daniel Webster alongside the Bible. I do, raley. I think I may put it ahead of the Bible. For if it wurn't fer spellin'-books and sich occasions as these, where would the Bible be? I should like to know. The man who got up, who compounded this work of inextricable valoo was a benufactor to the whole human race or any other." Here the spectacles fell off. The Squire replaced them in some confusion, gave the top of his head another twist, and felt of his glass eye, while poor Shocky stared in wonder, and Betsey Short rolled from side to side in the effort to suppress her giggle. Mrs. Means and the other old ladies looked the applause they could not speak.

"I app'int Larkin Lanham and Jeems Buchanan fer captings," said the Squire. And the two young men thus named took a stick and tossed it from hand to hand to decide which should have the "first choice." One tossed the stick to the other, who held it fast just where he happened to catch it. Then the first placed his hand above the second, and [thus] the hands were alternately changed to the top. The one who held the stick last without room for the other to take hold had gained the lot. This was tried three times. As Larkin held the stick twice out of three times, he had the choice. He hesitated a moment. Everybody looked toward tall Jim Phillips. But Larkin was fond of a venture on unknown seas and so he said, "I take the master," while a buzz of surprise ran round the room and the captain of the other side, as if afraid his opponent would withdraw the choice, retorted quickly, and with a little smack of exultation and defiance in his voice, "And *I* take Jeems Phillips."

And soon all present, except a few of the old folks, found themselves ranged in opposing hosts, the poor spellers lagging in, with what grace they could, at the foot of the two divisions. The Squire opened his spelling-book and began to give out the words to the two captains, who stood up and spelled against each other. It was not long till Larkin spelled "really" with one *l*, and had to sit down in confusion, while a murmur of satisfaction ran through the ranks of the opposing forces. His own side bit their lips. The slender figure of the young teacher took the place of the fallen leader, and the excitement made the house very quiet. Ralph dreaded the loss of prestige he would suffer if he should be easily spelled down. [Therefore he] listened carefully to the words which the Squire did not pronounce very distinctly, spelling them with extreme deliberation. This gave him an air of hesitation which disappointed those on his own side. They wanted him to spell with a dashing assurance.

But he did not begin a word until he had mentally felt his way through it. After ten minutes of spelling hard words, Jeems Buchanan, the captain of the other side, spelled "atrocious" with an *s* instead of a *c*, and subsided, his first choice, Jeems Phillips, coming up against the teacher. This brought the excitement to fever-heat. For though Ralph was chosen first, it was entirely on trust, and most of the company were disappointed. The champion who now stood up against the schoolmaster was a famous speller.

Jim Phillips was a tall, lank, stoop-shouldered fellow who had never distinguished himself in any other pursuit than spelling. Except in this one art of spelling he was of no account. He could not catch well or bat well in ball. He could not throw well enough to make his mark in that famous Western game of bull-pen. He did not succeed well in any study but that of Webster's Elementary. But in that he was—to use the usual Flat Creek locution—in that he was "a hoss." This genius for spelling is in some people a sixth sense, a matter of intuition. Some spellers are born and not made, and their facility reminds one of the mathematical prodigies that crop out every now and then to bewilder the world. Bud Means, foreseeing that Ralph would be pitted against Jim Phillips, had warned his friend that Jim could "spell like thunder and lightning," and that it "took a powerful smart speller" to beat him, for he knew "a heap of spelling-book." To have "spelled down the master" is next thing to having whipped the biggest bully in Hoopole County, and Jim had "spelled down" the last three masters. He divided the hero-worship of the district with Bud Means.

For half an hour the Squire gave out hard words. What a blessed thing our crooked orthography is! Without it there could be no spelling-schools. As Ralph discovered his opponent's mettle he became more and more cautious. He was now satisfied that Jim would eventually beat him. The fellow evidently knew more about the spelling-book than old Noah Webster himself. As he stood there, with his dull face and long sharp nose, his hands behind his back, and his voice spelling infallibly, it seemed to Hartsook that his superiority must lie in his nose. Ralph's cautiousness answered a double purpose; it enabled him to tread surely, and it was mistaken by Jim for weakness. Phillips was now confident that he should carry off the scalp of the fourth schoolmaster before the evening was over. He spelled eagerly, confidently, brilliantly. Stoop-shouldered as he was, he began to straighten up. In the minds of all the company the odds were in his favor. He saw this and became ambitious

to distinguish himself by spelling without giving the matter any thought.

Ralph . . . did not take hold until he was sure of his game. When he took hold, it was with a quiet assurance of success. As Ralph spelled in this dogged way for half an hour the hardest words the Squire could find, the excitement steadily rose in all parts of the house, and Ralph's friends even ventured to whisper that "maybe Jim had cotched his match, after all!"

But Phillips never doubted of his success.

"Theodolite," said the Squire.

"T-h-e, the, o-d, od, theod, o, theodo, l-y-t-e, theodolite," spelled the champion.

"Next," said the Squire, nearly losing his teeth in his excitement. Ralph spelled the word slowly and correctly, and the conquered champion sat down in confusion. The excitement was so great for some minutes that the spelling was suspended. Everybody in the house had shown sympathy with one or the other of the combatants. . . .

"Gewhilliky crickets! Thunder and lightning! Licked him all to smash!" said Bud, rubbing his hands on his knees. "That beats my time all holler!" And Betsey Short giggled until her tuck-comb fell out, though she was on the defeated side. Shocky got up and danced with pleasure. . . .

"He's powerful smart, is the master," said old Jack to Mr. Pete Jones. "He'll beat the whole kit and tuck of 'em afore he's through. I know'd he was smart. That's the reason I tuck him," proceeded Mr. Means.

"Yaas, but he don't lick enough. Not nigh," answered Pete Jones. "No lickin', no larnin', says I."

It was now not so hard. The other spellers on the opposite side went down quickly under the hard words which the Squire gave out. The master had mowed down all but a few, his opponents had given up the battle, and all had lost their keen interest in a contest to which there could be but one conclusion, for there were only the poor spellers left. But Ralph Hartsook ran against a stump where he was least expecting it. It was the Squire's custom, when one of the smaller scholars or poorer spellers rose to spell against the master, to give out eight or ten easy words, that they might have some breathing-spell before being slaughtered, and then to give a poser or two which soon settled them. He let them run a little, as a cat does a doomed mouse. There was now but one person left on the opposite side, and, as she rose in her blue

calico dress, Ralph recognized Hannah, the bound girl at old Jack Means's. She had not attended school in the district, and had never spelled in spelling-school before, and was chosen last as an uncertain quantity. The Squire began with easy words of two syllables, from that page of Webster, so well known to all who ever thumbed it, as "baker," from the word that stands at the top of the page. She spelled these words in an absent and uninterested manner. As everybody knew that she would have to go down as soon as this preliminary skirmishing was over, everybody began to get ready to go home, and already there was the buzz of preparation. Young men were timidly asking girls if "they could see them safe home," which was the approved formula, and were trembling in mortal fear of "the mitten." Presently the Squire, thinking it time to close the contest, pulled his scalp forward, adjusted his glass eye, which had been examining his nose long enough, and turned over the leaves of the book to the great words at the placē known to spellers as "incomprehensibility," and began to give out those "words of eight syllables with the accent on the sixth." Listless scholars now turned round, and ceased to whisper, in order to be in at the master's final triumph. But to their surprise "ole Miss Meanes' white nigger," as some of them called her in allusion to her slavish life, spelled these great words with as perfect ease as the master. Still not doubting the result, the Squire turned from place to place and selected all the hard words he could find. The school became utterly quiet; the excitement was too great for the ordinary buzz. Would "Meanes' Hanner" beat the master? Beat the master that had laid out Jim Phillips? Everybody's sympathy was now turned to Hannah. Ralph noticed that even Shocky had deserted him, and that his face grew brilliant every time Hannah spelled a word. In fact, Ralph deserted himself. As he saw the fine, timid face of the girl so long oppressed flush and shine with interest, as he looked at the rather low but broad and intelligent brow and the fresh, white complexion and saw the rich, womanly nature coming to the surface under the influence of applause and sympathy—he did not want to beat. If he had not felt that a victory given would insult her, he would have missed intentionally. The bulldog, the stern, relentless setting of the will, had gone, he knew not whither. And there had come in its place, as he looked in that face, a something which he did not understand. . . .

The Squire was puzzled. He had given out all the hard words in the book. He again pulled the top of his head forward. Then he wiped his spectacles and put them on. Then out of the depths

of his pocket he fished up a list of words just coming into use in those days—words not in the spelling-book. He regarded the paper attentively with his blue right eye. His black left eye meanwhile fixed itself in such a stare on Mirandy Means that she shuddered and hid her eyes in her red silk handkerchief.

“Daguerreotype?” sniffed the Squire. It was Ralph’s turn.

“D-a-u, dau——”

“Next.”

And Hannah spelled it right.

Such a buzz followed that Betsey Short’s giggle could not be heard, but Shocky shouted: “Hanner beat! my Hanner spelled down the master!” And Ralph went over and congratulated her. . . .

And then the Squire called them to order, and said: “As our friend Hanner Thomson is the only one left on her side, she will have to spell against nearly all on t’other side. I shall therefore take the liberty of procrastinating the completion of this interesting and exacting contest until to-morrow evening. I hope our friend Hanner may again carry off the cypress crown of glory. There is nothing better for us than healthful and kindly simulation.”

*The Hoosier Schoolmaster, 1871*

# The Meanest Man in Spring County

JOSEPH KIRKLAND

Ephraim [Prouder] wanted [his son] Zury to marry, but it was with "a sharp eye to the main chance." Property and personal service at no wages might both be secured by a judicious choice. Girls were not plenty, but at the Peddicombs' there were three of marriageable age. Their place was only three miles from Prouder's, and they were still the nearest neighbors. Mrs. Peddicomb had not long survived the birth of her three daughters. She died (as was and is common among farmers' wives) at not much over thirty years of age, just when her life ought to have been in its prime.

She was called a "Come-gals kind of a woman" by neighbors; partly in ridicule of her enthusiasm, and partly in admiration of her energy. It was told of her that she would get up before light on Monday, "fly 'raound," uncover the fire, hang on the kettle, and call up the ladder to the loft,—

"Come gals! *Dew* git up 'n' start in! To-day's Monday, to-morrow's Tuesday, 'n' next day's Wednesday; 'n' then comes Thursday, Friday, 'n' Saturday,—the hull week gone 'n' nothin' done."

The two younger girls had been cared for by the oldest, and so had retained some girlish freshness and delicacy, but as for Mary (the caretaker after her mother's death), she was "good-looking" only because she looked good.

On this marriage subject Ephraim took occasion to speak to Zury.

"Mary Peddicomb, she's a likely gal."

"Mary? Why not S'manthy 'n' Flory?"

"Oh, yes; they're all right tew. Th' ol' man he's got th' best part of a section. Some stawk, tew; 'n' th' haouse 'n' barn's fust rate."

"Ya-as. Ef th' haouse 'n' barn worn't so good he'd have more stawk th't 'd pay him right smart better'n th' haouse 'n' barn dooz."

"Peddicomb ain't like t' marry ag'in. Mary she'll have her sheer."

"Any more'n th' others?"

"Oh, no. All same. But I reck'n Mary she'd be more of a manager. *She* kin work. I've watched her ever sence she wuz knee-high to a hoppy-toad, 'n' *I* tell ye she kin work!"

"Ef ye mean more manageable ye mought's well say so."

"Wal, I dew 'llaow she'd be full 's little likely t' be uppish 's th' others."

“Ye ’llaow ’t humbly and humble goes t’gether?”

“Wal, yes; ’mongst the wimmin folks, substantially. Nothin’ sets ’em so bad up ’s bein’ ha’ans’m. Spiles ’em fer use abaout the place. Th’ humbly ones take t’ milkin’ more willin’ like; ’n’ I don’t see but what the caows give daown tew ’em full ’s well ’s tew the ha’ans’m ones. ’N’ then when ther’ looks goes the’ ’re apt t’ kick.”

“What, the caows?”

“No, the wimmin.”

(“Humbly” in country parlance is a corruption of “homely,” the opposite of handsome; plain, ungainly. “Humbly as a hedge fence.”)

Zury pondered on this shrewd counsel from time to time, but took no step toward marrying.

“Right smart o’ things t’ think on afore th’ ’ll be any hurry ’baout a-gittin’ marr’d. Th’ feller th’t ’s in an orfle sweat t’ marry, he ’s li’ble t’ be the very feller th’t ’s behind-hand with everythin’ else. Takes Time by the forelock ’baout gittin’ a wife; ’n’ by the fetlock ’baout gittin’ suthin’ fer her t’ eat.”

The boy was wedded to his idols quite as faithfully, if not quite so sordidly, as was his father. Their dispositions were much alike. No draft on their powers of endurance and self-denial could be too great.

As to niggardliness, there was a confessed rivalry between them. Each would tell of the money-making and money-saving exploits of the other, and of his efforts to surpass them.

“Dad’s a screamer t’ save money! D’ ye ever see him withe a plaow-pint ontew a plaow? Give him a hickory grub, ’n’ he kin dew it so it’ll run a good half a day; ’n’ then withe it on agin in noon-spell whilst th’ team ’s a eatin’, ’n’ then withe it on agin come night so ’s t’ be ready fer nex’ morn’n’, ’n’ keep it up fer a week that-a-way, sonner ’n pay th’ smith a cent t’ rivit it fast.”

“Thasso, thasso, Zury. Hickory twigs is cheaper ner iron any day.”

“Ya-as, dad; but then I kin make a shillin’ while ye ’re a savin’ a cent. Look at it wunst. I upped ’n’ sold the smith a half an acre, ’n’ took a mortgage on it, ’n’ made him dew all aour repairin’ b’ way of interest on the mortgage, ’n’ then foreclosed th’ mortgage when it come dew, ’n’ got th’ land back, shop ’n’ all. Business is business!”

Ephraim always wanted to buy at the shop where they wrapped up the purchases with the largest and strongest paper and twine, and the harnesses on the farm gradually grew to be largely composed of twine. Zury could buy everything at wholesale, half price, including merchandise, paper, twine, harnesses, and all.

One day Zury came across a poor little boy carrying a poorer little puppy and crying bitterly.

“What ’s the matter, sonny?”

“Our folks gimme a dime t’ draownd this h’yer purp, ’n’ I—I—I—hate t’ dew it.”

“Wal, ne’ mind, bub; gimme the dime ’n’ I’ll draownd him fer ye.”

Whereupon he took the cash and the pup and walked to the mill-pond, while the boy ran home. Zury threw the little trembling creature as far as he could into the pond. A few seconds of wildly waving small ears, legs, and tail, and then a splash, and then nothing but widening ripples. But out of one of the ripples is poked a little round object, which directs itself bravely toward the shore. Nearer and nearer struggles the small black nozzle, sometimes under water, and sometimes on top, but always nearer.

“Ye mis’able, ornery little fyce, ye! Lemme ketch ye swimmin’ ashore! I’ll throw ye furder nex’ time.”

At last poor little roly-poly drags itself to the land and squats down at the very water’s edge, evidently near to the end of its powers. Zury picks it up and swings it for a mighty cast, but stops and studies it a moment.

“Looks fer all the world like a sheep-dawg-purp.”

Whereupon he slipped it into his pocket and carried it home, where it grew up to be a fit mate to old Shep, and the ancestress of a line of sheep dogs which ornament Spring County to this day.

Later, when the same boy, grown older, applied to Zury for one of the pups, he charged him the full price, fifty cents, took all he had, thirty-six cents, and his note on interest for the balance, the dog being pledged as security. The note being unpaid when due, Zury took back the dog. “Business is business!”

Years passed, and it came time for the old man to be gathered to his fathers and the son to reign in his stead. When Ephraim lay on his deathbed, he whispered to Zury:—

“What day ’s to-day?”

“Tuesday, father.”

“I hope I’ll live ontel Thursday, ’n’ then ye kin hev the fun’r’l Sunday, ’n’ not lose a day’s work with the teams.”

He did not die till Saturday night, but Zury had the funeral on Sunday all the same, like a dutiful son as he was, bent on carrying out his father’s last request.

After Zury had grown to be a prosperous farmer, Chicago became the great market for the sale of grain. Teams by the score

would start out from far down the State, and, driving during the day and camping at night, make the long journey. They would go in pairs or squads so as to be able to double teams over the bad places. Forty or fifty bushels could thus be carried in one load, when the chief parts of the roads were good, and "the ready john" (hard cash), could be got for the grain, at twenty or thirty cents a bushel for corn or wheat. This sum would provide a barrel or two of salt, and perhaps a plow and a bundle of dry goods and knickknacks for the women folks, the arrival of which was a great event in the lonely farm-houses.

Zury had now working for him (beside Jule, who kept house and attended to the live stock), a young fellow who became a score of years afterward private, corporal, sergeant, lieutenant, and captain in the —th Illinois Volunteer Infantry in the great war. From his stories, told in bivouacs and beside camp fires, to toiling, struggling, suffering "boys in blue," these tales are taken almost verbatim. (Some of them have already found their way into print.)

"Zury always wanted to get onto the road with farmers whose housekeeping was good, because his own was—well, wuss th'n what we git down here in Dixie, an' there 's no need of *that*. Well, when they'd halt for noon-spell, Zury he 'd happen along promiscuous-like, an' most generally some of 'em would make him stop an' take a bite. He was good company if he *was* so near. 'N' then a man's feed warn't counted fer much, unless it was some store-truck or boughten stuff.

"But one day they jest passed the wink and sot it up on him, and come noon-spell nobody asked Zury an' me to eat. Zury left me to take care of both teams while he walked up and down the line of wagins. Everybody who hadn't 'jest eat,' warn't 'quite ready' yet, an' by the next time he came to those who hadn't been 'quite ready,' they'd 'jest eat.'

"Wal, Zury swallowed his disappointment and I swallowed all the chawed wheat I could git away with, and the first settlement we passed Zury went and bought a monstrous big bag of sody-crackers, and we eat them for supper and breakfast. And still we were not happy.

"Next noon-spell Zury said, 'Boys, s'posin' we kinder whack up 'n' mess together.' Wal, the others 'd had enough of their joke, and so they all agreed, and chipped in. Ham, pickles, pies, cakes, honey, eggs, apples, and one thing another. Ye see every man's o' woman knew that when they got together, her housekeep would be com-

pared with everybody else's; so these long drives were like donation parties, or weddings, or funerals,—well fed.

“Of course, Zury's sody-crackers went in with the rest, an' me an' Zury always ate *some* anyhow for appearance sake. I could see the fellers were all makin' fun of Zury's cute dodge of gettin' a dozen good meals for him an' me at the price of a few pounds of sody-crackers. But *then*, they did n't know Zury so well as they thought they did. By an' by the trip was done an' settlin'-up-time came, when each man was called on for his share of pasturage, ferriage, an' one thing another. Zury paid his, but he deducted out twenty-five cents paid for sody-crackers. Said it was one of the cash outlays for the common good, an' if any of the rest of 'em spent money an' did n't put it in, more fools they. Business is business.”

So Zury in the soda-cracker episode came out “top of the heap” as usual. The top of the heap was his accustomed place, but still he perceived that he was living under one useless disability, and, with his quick adaptation of means to ends and remedies to deficiencies, he simply—married. In doing this, he was guided by his father's shrewd words; counsel which had lain fallow in his memory for years.

Zury's marriageability had, of course, not been unobserved in the household of the three daughters. Peddicomb had remarked what a good “outin'” the Prouders had made in their purchase of swine from him, and cherished the same kind of feeling toward them that most of us experience when some other person has done better in a joint transaction than we did.

“Them Praouders, the' 'll skin outer the land all the' kin skin, 'n' then sell offen the place all 't anybody 'll buy, 'n' then feed t' the hawgs all a hawg 'll eat, 'n' then give th' rest t' th' dawg, 'n' then what th' dawg won't tech the' 'll live on theirselves.”

“Yew bet,” tittered Samantha, the second. “That thar ornery Zury Praouder he'd let a woman 'starve t' death ef he could. 'N' o' man Praouder wuz th' same way, tew. Th' o' woman she wuz near about skin 'n' bone when the' buried her. I seen her in her coffin, 'n' I know.”

“Oh, don't *yew* be scaret, S'manthy. I hain't saw Zury a-lookin' over t' your side o' the meetin'-haouse, no gre't,” kindly rejoined Flora, the youngest daughter.

“Who, me? He knows better! Not ef husbands wuz scarcer ner hen's teeth.”

“Six hundred 'n' forty acres o' good land, all fenced 'n' paid fer; 'n' a big orchard; 'n' all well stocked, tew.” (He added this with

a pang, remembering once more the pig-purchase, which by this time had grown to a mighty drove, spite of many sales.)

"Don't care ef he owned all ou' doors. Th' more the' 've got, th' more it shows haow stingy the' be."

Then the meek Mary ventured a remark.

"Mebbe ef Zury wuz t' marry a good gal it 'd be the makin' on him."

"Oh, Mary, *yew* hain't no call t' stan' up fer Zury! Th' o' man he 'd a ben more in *yewr* line."

"No, Zury would n't want *me*, ner no other man, I don't expect," she answered with a laugh—and a sigh.

One Sunday afternoon Zury rode over to Peddicomb's to get a wife. He tried to decide which girl to ask, but his mind would wander off to other subjects,—crops, live stock, bargains, investments. He did n't much think that either girl he asked would say no, but if she did, he could ask the others. When he came near the house he caught sight of one of the girls, in her Sunday clothes, picking a "posy" in the "front garding." It was Mary.

"Good day, Mary. Haow 's all the folks?"

"Good day, Zury—Mr. Praouder, I s'pose I should say. Won't ye 'light?"

"Wal, I guess not. I jes' wanted t' speak abaout a little matter."

"Wal, father he 's raoun' some 'ers. Haow 's the folks t' your 'us?"

"All peart; that is t' say th' ain't no one naow ye know, but me 'n' Jule 'n' Mac. That makes a kind of a bob-tail team, ye know, Mary. Nobody but Jule t' look out fer things. Not b't what he 's a pretty fair of a nigger as niggers go. He c'd stay raoun' 'n' help some aoutside."

"Whatever is he a-drivin' at?" thought Mary, but she said nothing.

"The's three of you gals to hum. Ye don't none of ye seem t' go off yit, tho' I sh'd a-thought Flory she 'd a-ben picked up afore this, 'n' S'manthy tew fer that matter."

Neither of them saw the unintended slur this rough speech cast upon poor Mary.

"Don't ye think we 'd better git married, Mary?"

"What, *me*?"

"Wal, yes." He answered this in a tone where she might have detected the suggestion, "Or one of your sisters," if she had been keen and critical. But she was neither. She simply rested her work-worn hand upon the gate post and her chin upon her hand, and looked dreamily off over the prairie. She pondered the novel proposition for some time, but fortunately not quite long enough

to cause Zury to ask if either of her sisters was at home, as he was quite capable of doing.

She looked up at him, the blood slowly mounting to her face, and considered how to say yes. He saw that she meant yes, so he helped her out a little. He wanted to have it settled and go.

“Wal, Mary, silence gives consent, they say. When shall it be?”

“Oh, yew ain’t in no hurry, Zury, I don’t expect.”

He was about to urge prompt action, but the thought occurred to him that she must want to get her “things” ready, and the longer she waited the more “things” she would bring with her. So he said:—

“Suit yerself, Mary. I’ll drop over ’n’ see ye nex’ Sunday, ’n’ we ’ll fix it all up.”

Mary had no objection to urge, though possibly in her secret heart she wished there had been a little more sentiment and romance about it. No woman likes “to be cheated out of her wooing,” but then this might come later. He called for her with the wagon on the appointed day, and they drove to the house of a justice of the peace who lived a good distance away. This was not for the sake of making a wedding trip, but because this particular justice owed Zury money, as Zury carefully explained.

And so Mary went to work for Zury very much as Jule did, only it was for less wages, as Jule got a dollar a month besides his board and clothes, while Mary did not.

For a year or two or three after marriage (during which two boys were born to them) Zury found that he had gained, by this investment, something more than mere profit and economy—that affection and sympathy were realities in life. But gradually the old dominant mania resumed its course, and involved in its current the weak wife as well as the strong husband. The general verdict was that both Zury and Mary were “jest ’as near ’s they could stick ’n’ live.” “They ’d skin a flea fer its hide ’n’ taller.”

“He gin an acre o’ graound fer the church ’n’ scule-house, ’n’ it raised the value of his hull farm more ’n’ a dollar an acre. ’N’ when he got onto the scule-board *she* ’llaowed she had n’t released her daower right, ’n’ put him up t’ tax the deestrick fer the price of that same acre o’ ground.”

So Zury, claiming the proud position of “the meanest ma-an in Spring Caounty,” would like to hear his claim disputed. If he had a rival he would like to have him pointed out, and would “try pootty hard but what he ’d match him.”

Strange as it may seem, these grasping characteristics did not

make Zury despised or even disliked among his associates. His "meanness" was not underhanded.

"Th' ain't nothin' *mean* abaout Zury, *mean* 's he is. Gimme a man as sez right aout 'look aout fer yerself,' 'n' I kin git along with him. It 's these h'yer sneakin' fellers th't 's one thing afore yer face 'n' another behind yer back th't I can't abide. Take ye by th' beard with one hand 'n' smite ye under th' fifth rib with t' other! He pays his way 'n' dooz 's he 'grees every time. When he buys 'taters o' me, I 'd jest 's live 's hev him measure 'em 's measure 'em myself with him a-lookin' on. He knows haow t' trade, 'n' ef yew don't, he don't want ye t' trade with him, that 's all; ner t' grumble if ye git holt o' the hot eend o' th' poker arter he 's give ye fair notice. Better be shaved with a sharp razor than a dull one."

On an occasion when the honesty of a more pretentious citizen was compared with Zury's to the advantage of the latter, he said:—

"Honest? Me? Wal, I guess so. Fustly, I would n't be noth'n' else, nohaow; seck'ndly, I kin 'fford t' be, seein' 's haow it takes a full bag t' stand alone; thirdly, I can't 'fford t' be noth'n' else, coz honesty 's th' best policy."

He was evidently quoting, unconsciously but by direct inheritance, the aphorisms of his fellow Pennsylvanian, Dr. Franklin.

In peace as in war strong men love foemen worthy of their steel. Men liked to be with Zury and hear his gay, shrewd talk; to trade with him, and meet his frankly brutal greed. He enjoyed his popularity, and liked to do good turns to others when it cost him nothing. When elected to local posts of trust and confidence he served the public in the same efficient fashion in which he served himself, and he was therefore continually elected to school directorships and other like "thank 'ee jobs."

*Zury: The Meanest Man in Spring County, 1887*

# Colonel Sellers at Home

MARK TWAIN

## I

Bearing Washington Hawkins and his fortunes, the stage-coach tore out of Swansea at a fearful gait, with horn tooting gaily and half the town admiring from doors and windows. But it did not tear any more after it got to the outskirts; it dragged along stupidly enough, then—till it came in sight of the next hamlet; and then the bugle tooted gaily again, and again the vehicle went tearing by the houses. This sort of conduct marked every entry to a station and every exit from it; and so in those days children grew up with the idea that stage-coaches always tore and always tooted; but they also grew up with the idea that pirates went into action in their Sunday clothes, carrying the black flag in one hand and pistoling people with the other, merely because they were so represented in the pictures: but these illusions vanished when later years brought their disenchanting wisdom. They learned then that the stage-coach is but a poor, plodding, vulgar thing in the solitudes of the highway; and that the pirate is only a seedy, unfantastic "rough," when he is out of the pictures.

Toward evening, the stage-coach came thundering into Hawkeye with a perfectly triumphant ostentation—which was natural and proper, for Hawkeye was a pretty large town for interior Missouri. Washington, very stiff and tired and hungry, climbed out, and wondered how he was to proceed now. But his difficulty was quickly solved. Colonel Sellers came down the street on a run and arrived panting for breath. He said:

"Lord bless you—I'm glad to see you, Washington—perfectly delighted to see you, my boy! I got your message. Been on the lookout for you. Heard the stage horn, but had a party I couldn't shake off—man that's got an enormous thing on hand—wants me to put some capital into it—and I tell you, my boy, I could do worse, I could do a deal worse. No, now, let that luggage alone; I'll fix that. Here, Jerry, got anything to do? All right—shoulder this plunder and follow me. Come along, Washington. Lord, I'm glad to see you! Wife and the children are just perishing to look at you. Bless you, they won't know you, you've grown so. Folks all well, I suppose? That's good—glad to hear that. We're

always going to run down and see them, but I'm into so many operations, and they're not things a man feels like trusting to other people, and so somehow we keep putting it off. Fortunes in them! Good gracious, it's the country to pile up wealth in! Here we are—here's where the Sellers dynasty hangs out. Dump it on the doorstep, Jerry—the blackest nigger in the state, Washington, but got a good heart—mighty likely boy, is Jerry. And now I suppose you've got to have ten cents, Jerry. That's all right—when a man works for me—when a man—in the other pocket, I reckon—when a man—why, where the mischief *is* that portmonnaie!—when a—well now that's odd—Oh, now I remember, must have left it at the bank; and b' George I've left my check-book, too—Polly says I ought to have a nurse—well, no matter. Let me have a dime, Washington, if you've got—ah, thanks. Now clear out, Jerry, your complexion has brought on the twilight half an hour ahead of time. Pretty fair joke—pretty fair. Here he is, Polly! Washington's come, children!—come now, don't eat him up—finish him in the house. Welcome, my boy, to a mansion that is proud to shelter the son of the best man that walks on the ground. Si Hawkins has been a good friend to me, and I believe I can say that whenever I've had a chance to put him into a good thing I've done it, and done it pretty cheerfully, too. I put him into that sugar speculation—what a grand thing that was, if we hadn't held on too long!”

True enough; but holding on too long had utterly ruined both of them; and the saddest part of it was, that they never had had so much money to lose before, for Sellers's sale of their mule crop that year in New Orleans had been a great financial success. If he had kept out of sugar and gone back home content to stick to mules it would have been a happy wisdom. As it was, he managed to kill two birds with one stone—that is to say, he killed the sugar speculation by holding for high rates till he had to sell at the bottom figure, and that calamity killed the mule that laid the golden egg—which is but a figurative expression and will be so understood. Sellers had returned home cheerful but empty-handed, and the mule business lapsed into other hands. The sale of the Hawkins property by the sheriff had followed, and the Hawkins hearts been torn to see Uncle Dan'l and his wife pass from the auction-block into the hands of a negro trader and depart for the remote South to be seen no more by the family. It had seemed like seeing their own flesh and blood sold into banishment.

Washington was greatly pleased with the Sellers mansion. It

was a two-story-and-a-half brick, and much more stylish than any of its neighbors. He was borne to the family sitting-room in triumph by the swarm of little Sellerses, the parents following with their arms about each other's waists.

The whole family were poorly and cheaply dressed; and the clothing, although neat and clean, showed many evidences of having seen long service. The Colonel's "stovepipe" hat was napless and shiny with much polishing, but nevertheless it had an almost convincing expression about it of having been just purchased new. The rest of his clothing was napless and shiny, too, but it had the air of being entirely satisfied with itself and blandly sorry for other people's clothes. It was growing rather dark in the house, and the evening air was chilly, too. Sellers said:

"Lay off your overcoat, Washington, and draw up to the stove and make yourself at home—just consider yourself under your own shingles, my boy—I'll have a fire going, in a jiffy. Light the lamp, Polly, dear, and let's have things cheerful—just as glad to see you, Washington, as if you'd been lost a century and we'd found you again!"

By this time the Colonel was conveying a lighted match into a poor little stove. Then he propped the stove-door to its place by leaning the poker against it, for the hinges had retired from business. This door framed a small square of isinglass, which now warmed up with a faint glow. Mrs. Sellers lit a cheap, showy lamp, which dissipated a good deal of the gloom, and then everybody gathered into the light and took the stove into close companionship.

The children climbed all over Sellers, fondled him, petted him, and were lavishly petted in return. Out from this tugging, laughing, chattering disguise of legs and arms and little faces, the Colonel's voice worked its way and his tireless tongue ran blithely on without interruption; and the purring little wife, diligent with her knitting, sat near at hand and looked happy and proud and grateful; and she listened as one who listens to oracles and gospels and whose grateful soul is being refreshed with the bread of life. By and by the children quieted down to listen; clustered about their father, and resting their elbows on his legs, they hung upon his words as if he were uttering the music of the spheres.

A dreary old haircloth sofa against the wall; a few damaged chairs; the small table the lamp stood on; the crippled stove—these things constituted the furniture of the room. There was no carpet on the floor; on the wall were occasional square-shaped

interruptions of the general tint of the plaster which betrayed that there used to be pictures in the house—but there were none now. There were no mantel ornaments, unless one might bring himself to regard as an ornament a clock which never came within fifteen strokes of striking the right time, and whose hands always hitched together at twenty-two minutes past anything and traveled in company the rest of the way home.

“Remarkable clock!” said Sellers, and got up and wound it. “I’ve been offered—well, I wouldn’t expect you to believe what I’ve been offered for that clock. Old Governor Hager never sees me but he says, ‘Come, now, Colonel, name your price—I *must* have that clock!’ But my goodness, I’d as soon think of selling my wife. As I was saying to—silence in the court, now, she’s begun to strike! You can’t talk against her—you have to just be patient and hold up till she’s said her say. Ah—well, as I was saying, when—she’s beginning again! Nineteen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two, twen—ah, that’s all. Yes, as I was saying to old Judge—go it, old girl, don’t mind me. Now how is that? Isn’t that a good, spirited tone? She can wake the dead! Sleep? Why you might as well try to sleep in a thunder factory. Now just listen at that. She’ll strike a hundred and fifty, now, without stopping—you’ll see. There ain’t another clock like that in Christendom.”

Washington hoped that this might be true, for the din was distracting—though the family, one and all, seemed filled with joy; and the more the clock “buckled down to her work” as the Colonel expressed it, and the more insupportable the clatter became, the more enchanted they all appeared to be. When there was silence, Mrs. Sellers lifted upon Washington a face that beamed with a child-like pride, and said:

“It belonged to his grandmother.”

The look and the tone were a plain call for admiring surprise, and therefore Washington said—(it was the only thing that offered itself at the moment):

“Indeed!”

“Yes, it did, didn’t it, father!” exclaimed one of the twins. “She was my great-grandmother—and George’s too; wasn’t she, father! *You* never saw her, but Sis has seen her, when Sis was a baby—didn’t you, Sis! Sis has seen her most a hundred times. She was awful deaf—she’s dead, now. Ain’t she, father!”

All the children chimed in, now, with one general Babel of information about the deceased—nobody offering to read the riot act or seeming to discountenance the insurrection or disapprove

of it in any way—but the head twin drowned all the turmoil and held his own against the field:

“It’s our clock, now—and it’s got wheels inside of it, and a thing that flutters every time she strikes—don’t it, father! Great-grandmother died before hardly any of us were born—she was an Old-School Baptist and had warts all over her—you ask father if she didn’t. She had an uncle once that was bald-headed and used to have fits; he wasn’t *our* uncle, I don’t know what he was to us—some kin or another I reckon—father’s seen him a thousand times—hain’t you, father! We used to have a calf that et apples and just chawed up dishrags like nothing, and if you stay here you’ll see lots of funerals—won’t he, Sis! Did you ever see a house afire? I have! Once me and Jim Terry—”

But Sellers began to speak now, and the storm ceased. He began to tell about an enormous speculation he was thinking of embarking some capital in—a speculation which some London bankers had been over to consult with him about—and soon he was building glittering pyramids of coin, and Washington was presently growing opulent under the magic of his eloquence. But at the same time Washington was not able to ignore the cold entirely. He was nearly as close to the stove as he could get, and yet he could not persuade himself that he felt the slightest heat, notwithstanding the isinglass door was still gently and serenely glowing. He tried to get a trifle closer to the stove, and the consequence was, he tripped the supporting poker and the stove-door tumbled to the floor. And then there was a revelation—there was nothing in the stove but a lighted tallow candle!

The poor youth blushed and felt as if he must die with shame. But the Colonel was only disconcerted for a moment—he straightway found his voice again:

“A little idea of my own, Washington—one of the greatest things in the world! You must write and tell your father about it—don’t forget that, now. I have been reading up some European scientific reports—friend of mine, Count Fugier, sent them to me—sends me all sorts of things from Paris—he thinks the world of me, Fugier does. Well, I saw that the Academy of France had been testing the properties of heat, and they came to the conclusion that it was a non-conductor or something like that, and of course its influence must necessarily be deadly in nervous organizations with excitable temperaments, especially where there is any tendency toward rheumatic affections. Bless you, I saw in a moment what was the matter with us, and says I, out goes your

fires!—no more slow torture and certain death for me, sir. What you want is the *appearance* of heat, not the heat itself—that's the idea. Well, how to do it was the next thing. I just put my head to work, pegged away a couple of days, and here you are! Rheumatism? Why a man can't any more start a case of rheumatism in this house than he can shake an opinion out of a mummy! Stove with a candle in it and a transparent door—that's it—it has been the salvation of this family. Don't you fail to write your father about it, Washington. And tell him the idea is mine—I'm no more conceited than most people, I reckon, but you know it is human nature for a man to want credit for a thing like that."

Washington said with his blue lips that he would, but he said in his secret heart that he would promote no such iniquity. He tried to believe in the healthfulness of the invention, and succeeded tolerably well; but after all he could not feel that good health in a frozen body was any real improvement on the rheumatism.

## II

Two months had gone by and the Hawkins family were domiciled in Hawkeye. Washington was at work in the real-estate office. . . . Colonel Sellers had asked him several times to dine with him, when he first returned to Hawkeye, but Washington, for no particular reason, had not accepted. . . . It occurred to him, now, that the Colonel had not invited him lately—could he be offended? He resolved to go that very day, and give the Colonel a pleasant surprise. . . .

The Sellers family were just starting to dinner when Washington burst upon them with his surprise. For an instant the Colonel looked nonplussed, and just a bit uncomfortable; and Mrs. Sellers looked actually distressed: but the next moment the head of the house was himself again, and exclaimed:

"All right, my boy, all right—always glad to see you—always glad to hear your voice and take you by the hand. Don't wait for special invitations—that's all nonsense among friends. Just come whenever you can, and come as often as you can—the oftener the better. You can't please us any better than that, Washington; the little woman will tell you so herself. We don't pretend to style. Plain folks, you know—plain folks. Just a plain family dinner, but such as it is, our friends are *always* welcome, I reckon you know that yourself, Washington. Run along, children, run along; Lafayette, stand off the cat's tail, child, can't you see what you're doing? Come, come, come, Roderick Dhu, it isn't nice for little

boys to hang on to young gentlemen's coat-tails—but never mind him, Washington, he's full of spirits and don't mean any harm. Children will be children, you know. Take the chair next to Mrs. Sellers, Washington—tut, tut, Marie Antoinette, let your brother have the fork if he wants it, you are bigger than he is."

Washington contemplated the banquet, and wondered if he were in his right mind. Was this the plain family dinner? And was it all present? It was soon apparent that this was indeed the dinner: it was all on the table: it consisted of abundance of clear, fresh water, and a basin of raw turnips—nothing more.

Washington stole a glance at Mrs. Sellers's face, and would have given the world, the next moment, if he could have spared her that. The poor woman's face was crimson, and the tears stood in her eyes. Washington did not know what to do. He wished he had never come there and spied out this cruel poverty and brought pain to that poor little lady's heart and shame to her cheek; but he was there, and there was no escape. Colonel Sellers hitched back his coat-sleeves airily from his wrists as who should say "*Now* for solid enjoyment!" seized a fork, flourished it and began to harpoon turnips and deposit them in the plates before him:

"Let me help you, Washington—Lafayette, pass this plate to Washington—ah, well, well, my boy, things are looking pretty bright, now, *I* tell you. Speculation—my! the whole atmosphere's full of money. I wouldn't take three fortunes for one little operation I've got on hand now—have anything from the casters? No? Well, you're right, you're right. Some people like mustard with turnips, but—now there was Baron Poniatowski—Lord, but that man did know how to live!—true Russian you know, Russian to the backbone; I say to my wife, give me a Russian every time, for a table comrade. The Baron used to say, 'Take mustard, Sellers, try the mustard—a man *can't* know what turnips are in perfection without mustard,' but I always said, 'No, Baron, I'm a plain man, and I want my food plain—none of your embellishments for Beriah Sellers—no made dishes for me! And it's the best way—high living kills more than it cures in this world, you can rest assured of that. Yes, indeed, Washington, I've got one little operation on hand that—take some more water—help yourself, won't you? help yourself, there's plenty of it. You'll find it pretty good, I guess. How does that fruit strike you?"

Washington said he did not know that he had ever tasted better. He did not add that he detested turnips even when they were

cooked—loathed them in their natural state. No, he kept this to himself, and praised the turnips to the peril of his soul.

“I thought you’d like them. Examine them—examine them—they’ll bear it. See how perfectly firm and juicy they are—they can’t start any like them in this part of the country, I can tell you. These are from New Jersey—I imported them myself. They cost like sin, too; but, Lord bless me, I go in for having the best of a thing, even if it does cost a little more—it’s the best economy, in the long run. These are the Early Malcolm—it’s a turnip that can’t be produced except in just one orchard, and the supply never is up to the demand. Take some more water, Washington—you can’t drink too much water with fruit—all the doctors say that. The plague can’t come where this article is, my boy!”

“Plague? What plague?”

“What plague, indeed? Why the Asiatic plague that nearly depopulated London a couple of centuries ago.”

“But how does that concern us? There is no plague here, I reckon.”

“’Sh! I’ve let it out! Well, never mind—just keep it to yourself. Perhaps I oughtn’t said anything, but it’s *bound* to come out sooner or later, so what is the odds? Old McDowells wouldn’t like me to—to—bother it all, I’ll just tell the whole thing and let it go. You see, I’ve been down to St. Louis, and I happened to run across old Dr. McDowells—thinks the world of me, does the doctor. He’s a man that keeps himself to himself, and well he may, for he knows that he’s got a reputation that covers the whole earth—he won’t condescend to open himself out to many people, but, Lord bless you, he and I are just like brothers; he won’t let me go to a hotel when I’m in the city—says I’m the only man that’s company to him, and I don’t know but there’s some truth in it, too, because although I never like to glorify myself and make a great to-do over what I am or what I can do or what I know, I don’t mind saying here among friends that I *am* better read up in most sciences, maybe, than the general run of professional men in these days. Well, the other day he let me into a little secret, strictly on the quiet, about this matter of the plague.

“You see it’s booming right along in our direction—follows the Gulf Stream, you know, just as all those epidemics do—and within three months it will be just waltzing through this land like a whirlwind! And whoever it touches can make his will and contract for the funeral. Well, you can’t *cure* it, you know, but you can prevent it. How? Turnips! that’s it! Turnips and water!

Nothing like it in the world, old McDowells says, just fill yourself up two or three times a day, and you can snap your fingers at the plague. 'Sh! keep mum, but just you confine yourself to that diet and you're all right. I wouldn't have old McDowells know that I told about it for anything—he never would speak to me again. Take some more water, Washington—the more water you drink, the better. Here, let me give you some more of the turnips. No, no, 'no, now, I insist. There, now. Absorb those. They're mighty sustaining—brimful of nutriment—all the medical books say so. Just eat from four to seven good-sized turnips at a meal, and drink from a pint and a half to a quart of water, and then just sit around a couple of hours and let them ferment. You'll feel like a fighting-cock next day."

Fifteen or twenty minutes later the Colonel's tongue was still chattering away—he had piled up several future fortunes out of several incipient "operations" which he had blundered into within the past week, and was now soaring along through some brilliant expectations born of late promising experiments upon the lacking ingredient of the eye-water. And at such a time Washington ought to have been a rapt and enthusiastic listener, but he was not, for two matters disturbed his mind and distracted his attention. One was, that he discovered, to his confusion and shame, that in allowing himself to be helped a second time to the turnips, he had robbed those hungry children. He had not needed the dreadful "fruit," and had not wanted it; and when he saw the pathetic sorrow in their faces when they asked for more and there was no more to give them, he hated himself for his stupidity and pitied the famishing young things with all his heart. The other matter that disturbed him was the dire inflation that had begun in his stomach. It grew and grew, it became more and more insupportable. Evidently the turnips were "fermenting." He forced himself to sit still as long as he could, but his anguish conquered him at last.

He rose in the midst of the Colonel's talk and excused himself on the plea of a previous engagement. The Colonel followed him to the door, promising over and over again that he would use his influence to get some of the Early Malcolms for him, and insisting that he should not be such a stranger but come and take pot-luck with him every chance he got. Washington was glad enough to get away and feel free again. He immediately bent his steps toward home.

In bed he passed an hour that threatened to turn his hair gray,

and then a blessed calm settled down upon him that filled his heart with gratitude. Weak and languid, he made shift to turn himself about and seek rest and sleep; and as his soul hovered upon the brink of unconsciousness, he heaved a long, deep sigh, and said to himself that in his heart he had cursed the Colonel's preventive of rheumatism, before, and now *let* the plague come if it must—he was done with preventives; if ever any man beguiled him with turnips and water again, let him die the death.

*The Gilded Age, 1873*

# Threshing Day

HAMLIN GARLAND

Life on a Wisconsin farm, even for the women, had its compensations. There were times when the daily routine of lonely and monotonous housework gave place to an agreeable bustle, and human intercourse lightened the toil. In the midst of the slow progress of the fall's plowing, the gathering of the threshing crew was a most dramatic event to my mother, as to us, for it not only brought unwonted clamor, it fetched her brothers William and David and Frank, who owned and ran a threshing machine, and their coming gave the house an air of festivity which offset the burden of extra work which fell upon us all.

In those days the grain, after being brought in and stacked around the barn, was allowed to remain until October or November when all the other work was finished.

Of course some men got the machine earlier, for all could not thresh at the same time, and a good part of every man's fall activities consisted in "changing works" with his neighbors, thus laying up a stock of unpaid labor against the home job. Day after day, therefore, father or the hired man shouldered a fork and went to help thresh, and all through the autumn months, the ceaseless ringing hum and the *bow-ouw, ouw-woo, boo-oo-oom* of the great balance wheels on the separator and the deep bass purr of its cylinder could be heard in every valley like the droning song of some sullen and gigantic autumnal insect.

I recall with especial clearness the events of that last threshing in the coulee.—I was eight, my brother was six. For days we had looked forward to the coming of "the threshers," listening with the greatest eagerness to father's report of the crew. At last he said, "Well, Belle, get ready. The machine will be here tomorrow."

All day we hung on the gate, gazing down the road, watching, waiting for the crew, and, even after supper, we stood at the windows still hoping to hear the rattle of the ponderous separator.

Father explained that the men usually worked all day at one farm and moved after dark, and we were just starting to "climb the wooden hill" when we heard a far-off faint halloo.

“There they are,” shouted father, catching up his old square tin lantern and hurriedly lighting the candle within it. “That’s Frank’s voice.”

The night air was sharp, and as we had taken off our boots we could only stand at the window and watch father as he piloted the teamsters through the gate. The light threw fantastic shadows here and there, now lighting up a face, now bringing out the separator which seemed a weary and sullen monster awaiting its den. The men’s voices sounded loud in the still night, causing the roused turkeys in the oaks to peer about on their perches, uneasy silhouettes against the sky.

We would gladly have stayed awake to greet our beloved uncles, but mother said, “You must go to sleep in order to be up early in the morning,” and reluctantly we turned away.

Lying thus in our cot under the sloping raftered roof we could hear the squawk of the hens as father wrung their innocent necks, and the crash of the “sweeps” being unloaded sounded loud and clear and strange. We longed to be out there, but at last the dance of lights and shadows on the plastered wall died away, and we fell into childish, dreamless sleep.

We were awakened at dawn by the ringing beat of the iron mauls as Frank and David drove the stakes to hold the “power” to the ground. The rattle of trace chains, the clash of iron rods, the clang of steel bars, intermixed with the laughter of the men, came sharply through the frosty air, and the smell of sizzling sausage from the kitchen warned us that our busy mother was hurrying the breakfast forward. Knowing that it was time to get up, although it was not yet light, I had a sense of being awakened into a romantic new world, a world of heroic action.

As we stumbled down the stairs, we found the lamp-lit kitchen empty of the men. They had finished their coffee and were out in the stack-yard oiling the machine and hitching the horses to the power. Shivering, yet entranced by the beauty of the frosty dawn, we crept out to stand and watch the play. The frost lay white on every surface, the frozen ground rang like iron under the steel-shod feet of the horses, and the breath of the men rose up in little white puffs of steam.

Uncle David on the feeder’s stand was impatiently awaiting the coming of the fifth team. The pitchers were climbing the stacks like blackbirds, and the straw-stackers were scuffling about the stable door.—Finally, just as the east began to bloom and long streamers of red began to unroll along the vast gray dome

of sky, Uncle Frank, the driver, lifted his voice in a "Chippewa war-whoop."

On a still morning like this his signal could be heard for miles. Long drawn and musical, it sped away over the fields, announcing to all the world that the McClintocks were ready for the day's race. Answers came back faintly from the frosty fields where dim figures of laggard hands could be seen hurrying over the plowed ground, the last team came clattering in and was hooked into its place, David called "All right!" and the cylinder began to hum.

In those days the machine was either a "J. I. Case" or a "Buffalo Pitts," and was moved by five pairs of horses attached to a "power" staked to the ground, round which they traveled pulling at the ends of long levers or sweeps, and to me the force seemed tremendous. "Tumbling rods" with "knuckle joints" carried the motion to the cylinder, and the driver who stood upon a square platform above the huge, greasy cog-wheels (round which the horses moved) was a grand figure in my eyes.

Driving, to us, looked like a pleasant job, but Uncle Frank thought it very tiresome, and I can now see that it was. To stand on that small platform all through the long hours of a cold November day, when the cutting wind roared down the valley sweeping the dust and leaves along the road, was work. Even I perceived that it was far pleasanter to sit on the south side of the stack and watch the horses go round.

It was necessary that the "driver" should be a man of judgment, for the horses had to be kept at just the right speed, and to do this he must gauge the motion of the cylinder by the pitch of its deep bass song.

The three men in command of the machine were set apart as "the threshers."—William and David alternately "fed" or "tended," that is, one of them "fed" the grain into the howling cylinder, while the other, oil-can in hand, watched the sieves, felt of the pinions, and so kept the machine in good order. The feeder's position was the high place to which all boys aspired, and on this day I stood in silent admiration of Uncle David's easy powerful attitudes as he caught each bundle in the crook of his arm and spread it out into a broad, smooth band of yellow straw on which the whirling teeth caught and tore with monstrous fury. He was the ideal man in my eyes, grander in some ways than my father, and to be able to stand where he stood was the highest honor in the world.

It was all poetry for us and we wished every day were threshing

day. The wind blew cold, the clouds went flying across the bright blue sky, and the straw glistened in the sun. With jarring snarl the circling zone of cogs dipped into the sturdy greasy wheels, and the single-trees and pulley-chains chirped clear and sweet as crickets. The dust flew, the whip cracked, and the men working swiftly to get the sheaves to the feeder or to take the straw away from the tail-end of the machine, were like warriors, urged to desperate action by battle cries. The stackers wallowing to their waists in the fluffy straw-piles seemed gnomes acting for our amusement.

The straw-pile! What delight we had in that! What joy it was to go up to the top where the men were stationed, one behind the other, and to have them toss huge forkfuls of the light fragrant stalks upon us, laughing to see us emerge from our golden cover. We were especially impressed by the bravery of Ed Green, who stood in the midst of the thick dust and flying chaff close to the tail of the stacker. His teeth shone like a negro's out of his dust-blackened face and his shirt was wet with sweat, but he motioned for "more straw" and David, accepting the challenge, signaled for more speed. Frank swung his lash and yelled at the straining horses, the sleepy growl of the cylinder rose to a howl and the wheat came pulsing out at the spout in such a stream that the carriers were forced to trot on their path to and from the granary in order to keep the grain from piling up around the measurer.— There was a kind of splendid rivalry in this backbreaking toil, for each sack weighed ninety pounds. Tired of wallowing in the straw at last, we went down to help Rover catch the rats uncovered by the pitchers as they reached the stack bottom. The horses, with their straining, outstretched necks, the loud and cheery shouts, the whistling of the driver, the roar and hum of the great wheel, the flourishing of the forks, the supple movement of brawny arms, the shouts of the men, all blended with the wild sound of the wind in the creaking branches of the oaks, and formed a glorious poem in our unforgetting minds.

At last the call for dinner sounded. The driver began to call, "Whoa there, boys! Steady, Tom," and to hold his long whip before the eyes of the more spirited of the teams in order to convince them that he really meant "stop." The pitchers stuck their forks upright in the stack and leaped to the ground. Randal, the band-cutter, drew from his wrist the looped string of his big knife, the stackers slid down from the straw-pile, and a race began

among the teamsters to see whose span would be first unhitched and at the watering trough. What joyous rivalry it seemed to us!

Mother and Mrs. Randal, wife of our neighbor, who was "changing works," stood ready to serve the food as soon as the men were seated.—The table had been lengthened to its utmost and pieced out with boards, and planks had been laid on stout wooden chairs at either side.

The men came in with a rush, and took seats wherever they could find them, and their attack on the boiled potatoes and chicken should have been appalling to the women, but it was not. They enjoyed seeing them eat. Ed Green was prodigious. One cut at a big potato, followed by two stabbing motions, and it was gone.—Two bites laid a leg of chicken as bare as a slate pencil. To us standing in the corner waiting our turn, it seemed that every "smitch" of the dinner was in danger, for the others were not far behind Ed and Dan.

At last even the gauntest of them filled up and left the room and we were free to sit at "the second table" and eat, while the men rested outside. David and William, however, generally had a belt to sew or a bent tooth to take out of the "concave." This seemed of grave dignity to us and we respected their self-sacrificing labor.

Nooning was brief. As soon as the horses had finished their oats, the roar and hum of the machine began again and continued steadily all the afternoon, till by and by the sun grew big and red, the night began to fall, and the wind died out.

This was the most impressive hour of a marvelous day. Through the falling dusk, the machine boomed steadily with a new sound, a solemn roar, rising at intervals to a rattling impatient yell as the cylinder ran momentarily empty. The men moved now in silence, looming dim and gigantic in the half-light. The straw-pile mountain high, the pitchers in the chaff, the feeder on his platform, and especially the driver on his power, seemed almost super-human to my childish eyes. Gray dust covered the handsome face of David, changing it into something both sad and stern, but Frank's cheery voice rang out musically as he called to the weary horses, "Come on, Tom! Hup there, Dan!"

The track in which they walked had been worn into two deep circles and they all moved mechanically round and round, like parts of a machine, dull-eyed and covered with sweat.

At last William raised the welcome cry, "All done!"—the men

threw down their forks. Uncle Frank began to call in a gentle, soothing voice, "*Whoa, lads! Steady, boys! Whoa, there!*"

But the horses had been going so long and so steadily that they could not at once check their speed. They kept moving, though slowly, on and on till their owners slid from the stacks and seizing the ends of the sweeps, held them. Even then, after the power was still, the cylinder kept its hum, till David throwing a last sheaf into its open maw, choked it into silence.

Now came the sound of dropping chains, the clang of iron rods, and the thud of hoofs as the horses walked with laggard gait and weary down-falling heads to the barn. The men, more subdued than at dinner, washed with greater care, and combed the chaff from their beards. The air was still and cool, and the sky a deep cloudless blue starred with faint fire.

Supper though quiet was more dramatic than dinner had been. The table lighted with kerosene lamps, the clean white linen, the fragrant dishes, the women flying about with steaming platters, all seemed very cheery and very beautiful, and the men who came into the light and warmth of the kitchen with aching muscles and empty stomachs, seemed gentler and finer than at noon. They were nearly all from the neighboring farms, and my mother treated even the few hired men like visitors, and the talk was all hearty and good tempered, though a little subdued.

One by one the men rose and slipped away, and father withdrew to milk the cows and bed down the horses, leaving the women and the youngsters to eat what was left and "do up the dishes."

After we had eaten our fill Frank and I also went out to the barn (all wonderfully changed now to our minds by the great stack of straw), there to listen to David and father chatting as they rubbed their tired horses.—The lantern threw a dim red light on the harness and on the rumps of the cattle, but left mysterious shadows in the corners. I could hear the mice rustling in the straw of the roof, and from the farther end of the dimly-lighted shed came the regular *strim-stram* of the streams of milk falling into the bottom of a tin pail as the hired hand milked the big roan cow.

All this was very momentous to me as I sat on the oat box, shivering in the cold air, listening with all my ears, and when we finally went toward the house, the stars were big and sparkling. The frost had already begun to glisten on the fences and well-curb, and high in the air, dark against the sky, the turkeys were roosting uneasily, as if disturbed by premonitions of approaching

Thanksgiving. Rover pattered along by my side on the crisp grass and my brother clung to my hand.

How bright and warm it was in the kitchen, with mother putting things to rights while father and my uncles leaned their chairs against the wall and talked of the west and of moving. "I can't get away till after New Year's," father said. "But I'm going. I'll never put in another crop on these hills."

With speechless content I listened to Uncle William's stories of bears and Indians, and other episodes of frontier life, until at last we were ordered to bed and the glorious day was done.

Oh, those blessed days, those entrancing nights! How fine they were then, and how mellow they are now, for the slow-paced years have dropped nearly fifty other golden mists upon that far-off valley. From this distance I cannot understand how my father brought himself to leave that lovely farm and those good and noble friends.

*A Son of the Middle Border, 1917*

# *A Boyhood in the Bush*

THOMAS J. LEBLANC

## I

My boyhood was spent in a small northern lumbering town in the heart of the pine forests that cluster along the Canadian border, and my earliest memories are of the whine of the great whirling disk saws in the mills, the crunch of the logs as they crowded the river that ran through the center of the town, the slap of the boards as they fell into place on the decks of the waiting schooners, and the call of the scalers and tally-men. At night the village was bathed in the radiance of the burners that stood against the dark sky like huge torches, each giving off its own flaming feather of sparks. Always there was the closeness of the bush that jostled the edges of the town and made inroads at some of the weaker spots. Over all was the clean fragrant smell of the pines.

Children were not numerous in such wild settlements and I had few playmates. To the few of us living there winter was a time of dog teams and, if we were lucky, an occasional visit to a lumber-camp. In this respect I was fortunate in having Billy. Billy was a friend of the family whose business I never knew. It was sufficient for me that he would call at our house with his sleigh, load me into the box, buried in bearskins, and whisk me away behind his jangling bells for a two- or three-day visit to a camp. For miles we rode, enveloped in a cloud of vapor from the horses, the bobs of the sleigh ringing on the surface of the snow. Finally we would turn on to the glistening surface of a tote road and I would cautiously raise myself and expose my face to the biting cold. We would be gliding down an icy lane, shining like a mirror, and with the tall snow-shrouded pines rising on either side. I used to liken it to riding down the aisle of a cathedral, a giant cathedral with a polished floor. I had once been in one at Christmas time, when the columns were hung with evergreens. Soon we would swing into the camp, a cluster of long, low log buildings huddled in a small clearing and completely buried in snow. Here we received a boisterous and profane greeting from the cook and cookee, and whoever else happened to be in camp.

At noon I sat proudly on the front seat of the stew sleigh, which was loaded with the noon meal for the men at the cutting. Upon our arrival at some central point the cook beat upon a dishpan with a large spoon and roared at the top of his voice, "Yow! 'S goin' to waste!" The ring of axes would then suddenly cease and answering calls would come from the white depths of the woods. Woolen-clad figures came tumbling in from all directions and soon the sleigh was surrounded by a noisy crowd of cutters, and they were served their noon meal of stew, bread, beans and tea by the cookee, who by the way, was the butt of most lumber-camp humor. The meal finished, the men engaged in various diversions: jacking blue jays, wrestling, or throwing things at the cookee. The noon hour over, they returned their various ways and soon the woods rang with the clear resonant notes of their biting axes, with now and then a call of "Comin' down!" followed by the crash of some old forest giant that shook the great folds of snow from the near-by trees as though a shiver had run through them.

At night the lumberjacks came riding in on loads of logs if the tote road passed near the camp, and it usually did. Supper was served at a long low table in one of the buildings and was a roaring and swashbuckling feast presided over by the foreman. The foreman held his position for the same reason that a leader-dog in a team holds his. If the occasion arose he could lick any one in camp, or at least his side could lick the other. All disputes were settled in this manner, promptly forgotten, and no grudge held. Immediately after supper the men gathered in the bunkhouse, a low cabin heated by a huge cylindrical base-burner stove that glowed cherry red in the dim light of the kerosene lamps. The walls were lined by a layer of double- or triple-decked bunks. There was no ventilation and when twenty or thirty lumberjacks gathered about the stove, all smoking cut plug tobacco, and with the place draped with steaming socks, mittens and mackinaws, the atmosphere was almost tangible. Add to this the melancholy whine of some inspired genius of the Jew's harp and the whole took on the air of a witch's cavern. Truly it was a sinister place.

Here as a boy, I sat silently drinking in every word of the tales that flew back and forth: epic tales of battles against thaws, floods, and log jams; tales of record cuttings, of how Black Bill beat Joe into the water with his logs, of the intense rivalry that existed between camps; tales of smallpox, the only disease that these men knew; of the legendary Paul Bunyan and his famous ox that was sixty feet between the eyes; of how Jean Frechette picked up

a three hundred pound cask of chain and loaded it into the box of a sleigh; of Georges St. Pierre, who, upon hearing of this, snorted, and, placing his arms around a small horse that stood near by, lifted it clear off the ground and held it struggling; and, lastly, tales of great fights and great fighters . . . tales of men.

During the night a teamster with a sprinkling sleigh flooded the tote road with water and by morning it was a smooth, unbroken sheet of ice. Getting out at two in the morning in weather that was always ten to twenty below zero required considerable enthusiasm, but one who did venture forth was magnificently repaid. These teamsters, and especially the night men, were the most picturesquely profane fellows that I have ever heard, and I have heard many. They were no ordinary blasphemers, but virtuosi. Their horses were full of spirit, and sprinkling the road at night was always attended by unlooked for contingencies. On these occasions, if you were fortunate enough to be present, you were afforded the treat of hearing an artist perform. There was no ordinary disconnected and unrelated flow of vulgarities, but a symphony of rational and harmonious phrases. Let us suppose that it was the off horse that offended. The teamster began his picture by addressing the horse in a low restrained voice. The main theme was genealogical and concerned the horse's ancestors. This was then amplified by a counterpoint that dealt with the horse's present status. The teamster had a fine feeling for the climax, and as he progressed his voice grew louder and louder, and his harmonies more full and round, finally ending in one completely summarizing and devastating phrase. One unconsciously listened for the rumble of the tympani and the crash of the cymbals. I have heard some of the older artists lecture to a horse on some of its major deficiencies for a full five minutes without once repeating the same phrase. Needless to say, their bark was worse than their bite, and sometimes I suspected that the horses appreciated that fact.

## II

Such visits to the camps were the high lights in the winter season and served to hasten the coming of spring. With spring came the drive and with the drive came the lumberjacks, and with their coming the boys of the town looked forward to days and days of riotous entertainment. When the ice melted, the logs that had been piled along the headwaters of the river and on the shores of the lakes were tumbled into the water and their journey

to the mills began. The crews followed the drive along the lakes and slower reaches of the river until the current was fast enough to swing the logs along, with the occasional untangling of a jam. Booms of logs fastened together by chains were thrown across the mouth of the river, and soon the bay was a heaving carpet of pine logs, each branded on the end with the mark of its owner. As the drive neared completion and the last fleet of logs swung into view around the upper bend of the river, the lumberjacks began to appear, at first singly and then in groups. Each rode a log easily and gracefully, his calked boots sunk into the soft bark, and leaning on his pike-pole or peavy. I remember how the sight used to thrill me. These fellows, superb in their disdain for danger, with such an air of complete poise, apparently gliding down the surface of a boiling river, seemed more like gods than mere men. I thought that if the gods ever actually visited the earth they would travel like this.

Across the river, some distance from the mouth and connecting the two halves of the town, was a bridge. During the drive the water level was high enough for the bridge to be reached by a leap from the logs that swirled beneath. This made a natural terminal for the lumberjacks. As each one approached the bridge on his log he let out a howl that would have sent the shivers up and down the spine of a lone wolf. This was to notify the town that it was about to be honored by his presence; it also called his friends to the bridge ends. At the proper time he gave forth another howl, a howl of warning to the passers-by as he hurled his pike-pole up on the floor of the bridge. Then, crouching on his log and measuring his distance accurately, at just the proper instant he leaped, caught the lower stringer of the bridge and like a cat swung himself up over the rail. A third howl, answered by his friends, denoted that he had officially arrived. Sometimes, but only rarely, he misjudged the distance and missed the lower stringer, in which case he never gave the third howl. His friends stood for a few minutes gazing mutely down stream at the pounding logs and then hurried off to tell the town bartenders that so-and-so had missed the bridge. Telling the bartenders was in the nature of a published obituary.

When the drive was finished and the last man in, down to the cook and cookee, the men were paid off. This pay amounted to a considerable sum, since they received three to five dollars a day all winter and had no expenses. Upon receipt of his money each jack hurried to his favorite boarding-house and purchased a ticket

which assured him board, room, tobacco and laundry all summer. The last item was merely a concession to gentility. Purchase of his ticket left him a considerable balance and with this thrust in the breast pocket of his shirt he swaggered forth . . . and the fun began.

First came the burling contests. Burling consisted of standing on a log with calked boots and, by running or walking at right angles to the axis of the log, imparting a spinning motion to it, somewhat in the manner of a treadmill. Two men on the same log constituted a burling contest. The river near the bridge was dotted with logs, each supporting a pair of burlers. One man won as soon as the other missed his footing and fell into the water. After this elimination the contest narrowed down to the two most skilful burlers. This ended the first day and the final spin was held over until the next. In the meantime the jacks were usually about evenly divided in opinion as to which was the better man of the two final contestants. Betting went on furiously and it was nothing for a whole camp crew to bet their last cent on one of the burlers if he happened to be from their camp. It made no practical difference whether they won or lost, for the money was spent in any case, the winners spending lavishly because they had won, and the losers accepting their hospitality for the equally good reason that they had lost.

All this occurred late in June. After the burling contest was decided, together with the score of fights that always attended such a public show, the next great social event, as it were, was the series of Fourth of July dances. They were so designated because they began on the Fourth, but they lasted until men and maidens, and especially the last, had been exhausted. They were held in places called boweries erected on vacant lots by the lumberjacks themselves. A bowery consisted of a large square floor, roofed over and buried in fragrant cedar and balsam boughs; it resembled somewhat a band stand or pavilion but it was built of clear, knotless white-pine boards, most of them two feet in width. At one end was a platform for the orchestra and the *caller*. The music was provided by an organ and a *fiddler*, not a violinist. The distinction is very real. A violinist clamps a violin between the lower border of his mandible and the prominence of his clavicle. With half-closed eyes he sways with the music, while his fingers flutter up and down the length of the fingerboard as he coaxes out the velvet tones. A fiddler, and especially a lumberjack fiddler, lays a fiddle carelessly against his chest, thumps loudly with one foot,

and uses only the middle six inches of the bow and a single position on the keyboard to tear out a melody that sets the calked boots to chewing up the new pine floor. While he plays he stares defiantly at his audience and only lowers his eyes at intervals to expectorate over the edge of the platform with sufficient accuracy to avoid harsh criticism from the dancers.

The dances in favor were the so-called square ones, and the party was continuous. There were halts only at the end of the different sets of figures to change partners or to allow fresh couples to replace jaded ones. The whole thing was full of gaudy color, with the lumberjacks in their brilliant woolens, the girls in their calicoes, and the cedar boughs and festoons of bunting over all. The girls were the town's finest and many were the romances that began to the tune of "Swing Yer Partner" or "All Join Hands." I hope I am not divulging any secret when I observe that some of these same girls, thrilled in those far-off days by a whirl in the arms of a perspiring jack, are now matrons of society in the North. A lumberjack, when he went to a dance, was fascinating in direct proportion to the vigor with which he whirled his partner, while the girls were classified as charming or not according to whether their skirts stood out gracefully when they were whirled through the figures. Undoubtedly some of the matrons that I have mentioned will be furious when I whisper that the girls resorted to the unfair device of sewing buckshot into the lower hems of their skirts. I know this to be a fact because once, in my childish absorption of what was going on at one end of the hall, I was struck over the eye by three whirling shot. The dances stopped when all the girls in town were so exhausted that they had to go home. By this time the bowery had spent its usefulness; the floor was chewed paper-thin by the grinding and stamping of calked boots.

The social activity of the town now moved to the saloons. Four stood at each end of the bridge, and as a boy I posted myself every night to command a view of all eight doors. When a fight started, I could be at the scene of battle in an instant. I never had long to wait. The show began with the sudden bursting open of the swinging doors by the rocketing rush of the two contestants, followed more leisurely by the crowd from within. Sometimes the fighters stopped their mauling upon reaching the road, and then each would regain the proper state of frenzy by reciting in a loud, vivid and profane manner what he intended to do to the other. These announced plans were usually very extravagant and gruesome, such as complete removal of the heart, plucking out an

eye, or tearing off a leg to be used as a club. The audience listened attentively, if a little bored, but never interrupted the recital. When the proper pitch of battle fury had been reached the two jacks hurled themselves upon each other, and in an instant became a gyrating, cursing mass of thrashing fists and flying feet. They cursed and clawed, sometimes, for an hour at a time, and ended a half mile from their starting point. Sometimes the oratorical preliminaries were dispensed with and the two jacks set immediately to the task of doing each other bodily harm.

These man-like animals, with the hearts and minds of children, set simple rules to govern their encounters. They operated on the rather logical premise that when one fights one does it in order to mutilate or maim the other fellow. There was no code. The task in hand was to beat the other fellow thoroughly, and the quickest and most efficient method was the best. Therefore, nothing was barred. Clawing, gouging, biting, butting, choking, kneeling and kicking were among the better known maneuvers, and not the least of the finer points of the game was to flop your adversary to the ground, and, just as he landed, to plant your calked boot accurately on his face. Many a jack had intricate if not beautiful designs tattooed on his cheeks by this method. They asked no quarter and gave none. The fight was continuous and ended only when one man could no longer resist. He was then officially out. Usually his opponent was the first to assist him to his feet and it was no uncommon sight to see two such fighters a half hour later arm in arm at the bar, singing each other's praises. A grudge never existed and the difference that caused a fight was considered permanently settled when the fight was concluded.

The favorite refreshment was a quart bottle of rot-gut whisky into which had been stuffed a handful of fine-cut chewing tobacco. The whole was shaken vigorously and was then ready for consumption. A treat on the street consisted in hauling out one's bottle, giving it a shake, drawing the cork with the teeth, running a thumb around the neck (a mark of good breeding, as the ruder members of the guild neglected this charming office) and extending it with the remark, "Have a smile, Jack." A refusal on any grounds constituted an insult, which in turn meant a fight. Very few ever refused.

But life for Jack was not all laughter, dancing and fighting. Sometimes there was a tear in his eye, for underneath his hard surface was a soft sentiment and a heart that could swell. I have seen a whole barroom, including the bartender, sad and tearful

when some husky, whisky baritone sang, "The Little Boy in Green" or recited "Father, Dear Father, Come Home With Me Now." When the Widow Monahan's cottage at the edge of town burned early one morning, the whole saloon population swarmed to the scene, and by nightfall, after numerous fights and much profanity, the widow gazed through her tears over a flashing new picket fence at a handsome new cottage, complete even to the chicken-coop full of chickens. On another occasion Smoky Paquette, one of the hardest fighters of the North, was told that Father de Vere, the parish priest, had been pining for years for a stained-glass window for his little church. Though none of the jacks had ever seen the inside of a church, least of all Smoky, he, after a proper mellowing with rot-gut, elected himself collector for the worthy pastor. He mounted a table in the Deerhead Saloon and in a bellow that made the flames of the kerosene lamps quiver announced, "I jest heerd that le bon père d'Veve wants a picture windy fer his church, an' I'm 'nouncing that you lousy log rollers is about to tally in fer it." Then with his round felt *bush-hat* in a fist like a Smithfield ham, he made the rounds of the eight saloons. His method was simple and to the point. He approached each jack, thrust the hat under the victim's nose with his left hand, cocked back his right, and in a voice like a peevish bear, announced that he was collecting for a picture windy for the church. Since Smoky had proven his ferocity on a hundred occasions, his method brought results, and soon one of the cookees, properly lickered up, was wobbling on his way to the priest's house with the money for a picture windy stuffed in the front of his shirt.

So day followed day, each jammed with action and excitement, until all the cash of the men was spent and the town settled down into its summer doze. Then Jack sat in front of his boarding-house and whittled miniature cant-hooks and peavies for the kids. Or he and his friends strolled along in pairs, and where they walked their calked boots gouged the sidewalk into two parallel troughs. After a summer shower these troughs filled with water, and when the sun reappeared I sat fascinated, watching the men swaggering along the little silvery lanes, their heavy boots throwing out sprays of diamonds at every step. Or sometimes I crouched near the basement window of a saloon in the cool, moist draft that came from the beer coils, and listened to tales by my favorite old jack, Pop Gardner. Once I said to him, "Pop, you're getting old. Some day a tree will get you, or you'll die in a barroom. Why don't you quit?" Pop bristled up in his red arm-chair and, glaring down at

me, replied, "Sure thing, bucko, a tree will get me, er I'll turn in my check in a barroom; but what of it? Ain't I pickin' my own way of goin', eh? An' won't I be cashin' in among frien's? 'N that's a hell of a lot mor' 'n some of these soft bellies can say. God a-mighty, kid, think o' peterin' out in a hoss-pee-tal among strangers!"

Jack had no thought of the hereafter. His religion was chance, and chances existed only to be taken. If you were lucky certain things happened to you, and if you were unlucky other things happened. In either case you could do nothing about it. His life was hard. He worked hard, played hard, and fought hard. His liquor was hard, his muscles were hard and so was his voice. Everything about him was hard except his heart, and that was soft, full of rough sentiment, and a capacity for loyalty, friendship and generosity that knew no bounds. Clean, hard and vital, Jack was an honest man.

The river that formerly writhed with logs is now lined with summer cottages. The lake shore where Jack stacked his logs is strewn with he-fairies, in life-guard bathing suits, and with grease on their hair. The bridge at either end is flanked by filling stations that pump gasoline into the digestive tracts of thirsty Fords. The vacant lots where the boweries once stood now swarm with tea-rooms, and instead of the buxom damsels of the buckshot skirts, we have their hollow-chested daughters, faces daubed like clowns, smoking cigarettes over plates of cinnamon toast. The kindly, tolerant Father de Vere has given place to a half dozen pulpit-pounders who hurl politics at dull and stupid congregations. All of them, chips . . . chips and edgings from what once was a noble stand of timber.

*American Mercury*, September, 1924

# Packingtoun

UPTON SINCLAIR

They passed down the busy street that led to the yards. It was still early morning, and everything was at its high tide of activity. A steady stream of employees was pouring through the gate—employees of the higher sort, at this hour, clerks and stenographers and such. For the women there were waiting big two-horse wagons, which set off at a gallop as fast as they were filled. In the distance there was heard again the lowing of the cattle, a sound as of a far-off ocean calling. They followed it, this time, as eager as children in sight of a circus menagerie—which, indeed, the scene a good deal resembled. They crossed the railroad tracks, and then on each side of the street were the pens full of cattle; they would have stopped to look, but Jokubas hurried them on, to where there was a stairway and a raised gallery, from which everything could be seen. Here they stood, staring, breathless with wonder.

There is over a square mile of space in the yards, and more than half of it is occupied by cattle-pens; north and south as far as the eye can reach there stretches a sea of pens. And they were all filled—so many cattle no one had ever dreamed existed in the world. Red cattle, black, white, and yellow cattle; old cattle and young cattle; great bellowing bulls and little calves not an hour born; meek-eyed milch cows and fierce, long-horned Texas steers. The sound of them here was as of all the barnyards of the universe; and as for counting them—it would have taken all day simply to count the pens. Here and there ran long alleys, blocked at intervals by gates; and Jokubas told them that the number of these gates was twenty-five thousand. Jokubas had recently been reading a newspaper article which was full of statistics such as that, and he was very proud as he repeated them and made his guests cry out with wonder. Jurgis, too, had a little of this sense of pride. Had he not just gotten a job, and become a sharer in all this activity, a cog in this marvelous machine?

Here and there about the alleys galloped men upon horseback, booted, and carrying long whips; they were very busy, calling to each other, and to those who were driving the cattle. They were drovers and stock-raisers, who had come from far States, and brokers and commission-merchants, and buyers for all the big

packing-houses. Here and there they would stop to inspect a bunch of cattle, and there would be a parley, brief and businesslike. The buyer would nod or drop his whip, and that would mean a bargain; and he would note it in his little book, along with hundreds of others he had made that morning. Then Jokubas pointed out the place where the cattle were driven to be weighed, upon a great scale that would weigh a hundred thousand pounds at once and record it automatically. It was near to the east entrance that they stood, and all along this east side of the yards ran the railroad tracks, into which the cars were run, loaded with cattle. All night long this had been going on, and now the pens were full; by tonight they would all be empty, and the same thing would be done again.

“And what will become of all these creatures?” cried Teta Elzbieta.

“By to-night,” Jokubas answered, “they will all be killed and cut up; and over there on the other side of the packing-houses are more railroad tracks, where the cars come to take them away.”

There were two hundred and fifty miles of track within the yards, their guide went on to tell them. They brought about ten thousand head of cattle every day, and as many hogs, and half as many sheep—which meant some eight or ten million live creatures turned into food every year. One stood and watched, and little by little caught the drift of the tide, as it set in the direction of the packing-houses. There were groups of cattle being driven to the chutes, which were roadways about fifteen feet wide, raised high above the pens. In these chutes the stream of animals was continuous; it was quite uncanny to watch them, pressing on to their fate, all unsuspecting—a very river of death. Our friends were not poetical, and the sight suggested to them no metaphors of human destiny; they thought only of the wonderful efficiency of it all. The chutes into which the hogs went climbed high up—to the very top of the distant buildings; and Jokubas explained that the hogs went up by the power of their own legs, and then their weight carried them back through all the processes necessary to make them into pork.

“They don’t waste anything here,” said the guide, and then he laughed and added a witticism, which he was pleased that his unsophisticated friends should take to be his own: “They use everything about the hog except the squeal.” In front of Brown’s General Office building there grows a tiny plot of grass, and this, you may learn, is the only bit of green thing in Packingtown; likewise this jest about the hog and his squeal, the stock in trade of all the guides, is the one gleam of humour that you will find there.

After they had seen enough of the pens, the party went up the street, to the mass of buildings which occupy the centre of the yards. These buildings, made of brick and stained with innumerable layers of Packingtown smoke, were painted all over with advertising signs, from which the visitor realized suddenly that he had come to the home of many of the torments of his life. It was here that they made those products with the wonders of which they pestered him so—by placards that defaced the landscape when he travelled, and by staring advertisements in the newspapers and magazines—by silly little jingles that he could not get out of his mind, and gaudy pictures that lurked for him around every street corner. Here was where they made Brown's Imperial Hams and Bacon, Brown's Dressed Beef, Brown's Excelsior Sausages! Here was the headquarters of Durham's Pure Leaf Lard, of Durham's Breakfast Bacon, Durham's Canned Beef, Potted Ham, Devilled Chicken, Peerless Fertilizer!

Entering one of the Durham buildings, they found a number of other visitors waiting; and before long there came a guide to escort them through the place. They make a great feature of showing strangers through the packing-plants, for it is a good advertisement. But ponas Jokubas whispered maliciously that the visitors did not see any more than the packers wanted them to.

They climbed a long series of stairways outside of the building, to the top of its five or six stories. Here was the chute, with its river of hogs, all patiently toiling upward; there was a place for them to rest to cool off, and then through another passage-way they went into a room from which there is no returning for hogs.

It was a long, narrow room, with a gallery along it for visitors. At the head there was a great iron wheel, about twenty feet in circumference, with rings here and there along its edge. Upon both sides of this wheel there was a narrow space, into which came the hogs at the end of their journey; in the midst of them stood a great burly negro, bare-armed and bare-chested. He was resting for the moment, for the wheel had stopped while men were cleaning up. In a minute or two, however, it began slowly to revolve, and then the men upon each side of it sprang to work. They had chains which they fastened about the leg of the nearest hog, and the other end of the chain they hooked into one of the rings upon the wheel. So, as the wheel turned, a hog was suddenly jerked off his feet and borne aloft.

At the same instant the ear was assailed by a most terrifying shriek; the visitors started in alarm, the women turned pale and

shrank back. The shriek was followed by another, louder and yet more agonizing—for once started upon that journey, the hog never came back; at the top of the wheel he was shunted off upon a trolley, and went sailing down the room. And meantime another was swung up, and then another, and another, until there was a double line of them, each dangling by a foot and kicking in frenzy—and squealing. The uproar was appalling, perilous to the eardrums; one feared there was too much sound for the room to hold—that the walls must give way or the ceiling crack. There were high squeals and low squeals, grunts, and wails of agony; there would come a momentary lull, and then a fresh outburst, louder than ever, surging up to a deafening climax. It was too much for some of the visitors—the men would look at each other, laughing nervously, and the women would stand with hands clenched, and the blood rushing to their faces, and the tears starting in their eyes.

Meanwhile, heedless of all these things, the men upon the floor were going about their work. Neither squeals of hogs nor tears of visitors made any difference to them; one by one they hooked up the hogs, and one by one with a swift stroke they slit their throats. There was a long line of hogs, with squeals and life-blood ebbing away together; until at last each started again, and vanished with a splash into a huge vat of boiling water.

It was all so very businesslike that one watched it fascinated. It was pork-making by machinery, pork-making by applied mathematics. And yet somehow the most matter-of-fact person could not help thinking of the hogs; they were so innocent, they came so very trustingly; and they were so very human in their protests—and so perfectly within their rights! They had done nothing to deserve it; and it was adding insult to injury, as the thing was done here, swinging them up in this cold-blooded impersonal way, without a pretence at apology, without the homage of a tear. Now and then a visitor wept, to be sure; but this slaughtering-machine ran on, visitors or no visitors. It was like some horrible crime committed in a dungeon, all unseen and unheeded, buried out of sight and of memory.

One could not stand and watch very long without becoming philosophical, without beginning to deal in symbols and similes, and to hear the hog-squeal of the universe. Was it permitted to believe that there was nowhere upon the earth, or above the earth, a heaven for hogs, where they were requited for all this suffering? Each one of these hogs was a separate creature. Some were white

hogs, some were black; some were brown, some were spotted; some were old, some were young; some were long and lean, some were monstrous. And each of them had an individuality of his own, a will of his own, a hope and a heart's desire; each was full of self-confidence, of self-importance, and a sense of dignity. And trusting and strong in faith he had gone about his business, the while a black shadow hung over him and a horrid Fate waited in his pathway. Now suddenly it had swooped upon him, and had seized him by the leg. Relentless, remorseless, it was; all his protests, his screams, were nothing to it—it did its cruel will with him, as if his wishes, his feelings, had simply no existence at all; it cut his throat and watched him gasp out his life. And now was one to believe that there was nowhere a god of hogs, to whom this hog-personality was precious, to whom these hog-squeals and agonies had a meaning? Who would take this hog into his arms and comfort him, reward him for his work well done, and show him the meaning of his sacrifice? Perhaps some glimpse of all this was in the thoughts of our humble-minded Jurgis, as he turned to go on with the rest of the party, and muttered: "Dieve—but I'm glad I'm not a hog!"

The carcass hog was scooped out of the vat by machinery, and then it fell to the second floor, passing on the way through a wonderful machine with numerous scrapers, which adjusted themselves to the size and shape of the animal, and sent it out at the other end with nearly all of its bristles removed. It was then again strung up by machinery, and sent upon another trolley ride; this time passing between two lines of men, who sat upon a raised platform, each doing a certain single thing to the carcass as it came to him. One scraped the outside of a leg; another scraped the inside of the same leg. One with a swift stroke cut the throat; another with two swift strokes severed the head, which fell to the floor and vanished through a hole. Another made a slit down the body; a second opened the body wider; a third with a saw cut the breast-bone; a fourth loosened the entrails; a fifth pulled them out—and they also slid through a hole in the floor. There were men to scrape each side and men to scrape the back; there were men to clean the carcass inside, to trim it and wash it. Looking down this room, one saw, creeping slowly, a line of dangling hogs a hundred yards in length; and for every yard there was a man, working as if a demon were after him. At the end of this hog's progress every inch of the carcass had been gone over several times; and then it was rolled into the chilling-room, where it

stayed for twenty-four hours, and where a stranger might lose himself in a forest of freezing hogs.

Before the carcass was admitted here, however, it had to pass a government inspector, who sat in the doorway and felt of the glands in the neck for tuberculosis. This government inspector did not have the manner of a man who was worked to death; he was apparently not haunted by a fear that the hog might get by him before he had finished his testing. If you were a sociable person, he was quite willing to enter into conversation with you, and to explain to you the deadly nature of the ptomaines which are found in tubercular pork; and while he was talking with you you could hardly be so ungrateful as to notice that a dozen carcasses were passing him untouched. This inspector wore a blue uniform, with brass buttons, and he gave an atmosphere of authority to the scene, and, as it were, put the stamp of official approval upon the things which were done in Durham's.

Jurgis went down the line with the rest of the visitors, staring open-mouthed, lost in wonder. He had dressed hogs himself in the forest of Lithuania; but he had never expected to live to see one hog dressed by several hundred men. It was like a wonderful poem to him, and he took it all in guilelessly—even to the conspicuous signs demanding immaculate cleanliness of the employees. Jurgis was vexed when the cynical Jokubas translated these signs with sarcastic comments, offering to take them to the secret-rooms where the spoiled meats went to be doctored.

The party descended to the next floor, where the various waste materials were treated. Here came the entrails, to be scraped and washed clean for sausage-casings; men and women worked here in the midst of a sickening stench, which caused the visitors to hasten by, gasping. To another room came all the scraps to be "tanked," which meant boiling and pumping off the grease to make soap and lard; below they took out the refuse, and this, too, was a region in which the visitors did not linger. In still other places men were engaged in cutting up the carcasses that had been through the chilling-rooms. First there were the "splitters," the most expert workmen in the plant, who earned as high as fifty cents an hour, and did not a thing all day except chop hogs down the middle. Then there were "cleaver men," great giants with muscles of iron; each had two men to attend him—to slide the half carcass in front of him on the table, and hold it while he chopped it, and then turn each piece so that he might chop it once more. His cleaver had a blade about two feet long, and he never

made but one cut; he made it so neatly, too, that his implement did not smite through and dull itself—there was just enough force for a perfect cut, and no more. So through various yawning holes there slipped to the floor below—to one room hams, to another fore-quarters, to another sides of pork. One might go down to this floor and see the pickling-rooms, where the hams were put into vats, and the great smoke-rooms, with their air-tight iron doors. In other rooms they prepared salt-pork—there were whole cellars full of it, built up in great towers to the ceiling. In yet other rooms they were putting up meat in boxes and barrels, and wrapping hams and bacon in oiled paper, sealing and labelling and sewing them. From the doors of these rooms went men with loaded trucks, to the platform where freight-cars were waiting to be filled; and one went out there and realized with a start that he had come at last to the ground floor of this enormous building.

Then the party went across the street to where they did the killing of beef—where every hour they turned four or five hundred cattle into meat. Unlike the place they had left, all this work was done on one floor; and instead of there being one line of carcasses which moved to the workmen, there were fifteen or twenty lines, and the men moved from one to another of these. This made a scene of intense activity, a picture of human power wonderful to watch. It was all in one great room, like a circus amphitheatre, with a gallery for visitors running over the centre.

Along one side of the room ran a narrow gallery, a few feet from the floor; into which gallery the cattle were driven by men with goads which gave them electric shocks. Once crowded in here, the creatures were prisoned, each in a separate pen, by gates that shut, leaving them no room to turn around; and while they stood bellowing and plunging, over the top of the pen there leaned one of the “knockers,” armed with a sledge-hammer, and watching for a chance to deal a blow. The room echoed with the thuds in quick succession, and the stamping and kicking of the steers. The instant the animal had fallen, the “knocker” passed on to another; while a second man raised a lever, and the side of the pen was raised, and the animal, still kicking and struggling, slid out to the “killing-bed.” Here a man put shackles about one leg, and pressed another lever, and the body was jerked up into the air. There were fifteen or twenty such pens, and it was a matter of only a couple of minutes to knock fifteen or twenty cattle and roll them out. Then once more the gates were opened, and another lot rushed in; and so out of each pen there rolled a steady stream of

carcasses, which the men upon the killing-beds had to get out of the way.

The manner in which they did this was something to be seen and never forgotten. They worked with furious intensity, literally upon the run—at a pace with which there is nothing to be compared except a football game. It was all highly specialized labour, each man having his task to do; generally this would consist of only two or three specific cuts, and he would pass down the line of fifteen or twenty carcasses, making these cuts upon each. First there came the “butcher,” to bleed them; this meant one swift stroke, so swift that you could not see it—only the flash of the knife; and before you could realize it, the man had darted on to the next line, and a stream of bright red was pouring out upon the floor. This floor was half an inch deep with blood, in spite of the best efforts of men who kept shovelling it through holes; it must have made the floor slippery, but no one could have guessed this by watching the men at work.

The carcass hung for a few minutes to bleed; there was no time lost, however, for there were several hanging in each line, and one was always ready. It was let down to the ground, and there came the “headsman,” whose task it was to sever the head, with two or three swift strokes. Then came the “floorsman,” to make the first cut in the skin; and then another to finish ripping the skin down the centre; and then half a dozen more in swift succession, to finish the skinning. After they were through, the carcass was again swung up; and while a man with a stick examined the skin, to make sure that it had not been cut, and another rolled it up and tumbled it through one of the inevitable holes in the floor, the beef proceeded on its journey. There were men to cut it, and men to split it, and men to gut it and scrape it clean inside. There were some with hose which threw jets of boiling water upon it, and others who removed the feet and added the final touches. In the end, as with the hogs, the finished beef was run into the chilling-room, to hang its appointed time.

The visitors were taken there and shown them, all neatly hung in rows, labelled conspicuously with the tags of the government inspectors—and some, which had been killed by a special process, marked with the sign of the “kosher” rabbi, certifying that it was fit for sale to the orthodox. And then the visitors were taken to the other parts of the building, to see what became of each particle of the waste material that had vanished through the floor; and to the pickling-rooms and the salting-rooms, the canning-rooms and

the packing-rooms, where choice meat was prepared for shipping in refrigerator-cars, destined to be eaten in all the four corners of civilization. Afterward they went outside, wandering about among the mazes of buildings in which was done the work auxiliary to this great industry. There was scarcely a thing needed in the business that Durham and Company did not make for themselves. There was a great steam-power plant and an electricity plant. There was a barrel factory and a boiler-repair shop. There was a building to which the grease was piped, and made into soap and lard; and then there was a factory for making lard-cans, and another for making soap-boxes. There was a building in which the bristles were cleaned and dried, for the making of hair-cushions and such things; there was a building where the skins were dried and tanned, there was another where heads and feet were made into glue, and another where bones were made into fertilizer. No tiniest particle of organic matter was wasted in Durham's. Out of the horns of the cattle they made combs, buttons, hair-pins, and imitation ivory; out of the shin-bones and other big bones they cut knife and tooth-brush handles, and mouthpieces for pipes; out of the hoofs they cut hair-pins and buttons, before they made the rest into glue. From such things as feet, knuckles, hide clippings, and sinews came such strange and unlikely products as gelatin, isinglass, and phosphorus, bone-black, shoe-blackening, and bone-oil. They had curled-hair works for the cattle tails, and a "wool-pullery" for the sheep skins; they made pepsin from the stomachs of the pigs, and albumen from the blood, and violin strings from the ill-smelling entrails. When there was nothing else to be done with a thing, they first put it into a tank and got out of it all the tallow and grease, and then they made it into fertilizer. All these industries were gathered into buildings near by, connected by galleries and railroads with the main establishment; and it was estimated that they had handled nearly a quarter of a billion of animals since the founding of the plant by the elder Durham a generation and more ago. If you counted with it the other big plants—and they were now really all one—it was, so Jokubas informed them, the greatest aggregation of labour and capital ever gathered in one place. It employed thirty thousand men; it supported directly two hundred and fifty thousand people in its neighbourhood, and indirectly it supported half a million. It sent its products to every country in the civilized world, and it furnished the food for no less than thirty million people.

*The Jungle*, 1906

# Getting on the Chicago "Globe"

THEODORE DREISER

Picture a dreamy cub of twenty-one, long, spindling, a pair of gold-framed spectacles on his nose, his hair combed *à la pompadour*, a new spring suit consisting of light check trousers and bright blue coat and vest, a brown fedora hat, new yellow shoes, starting out to force his way into the newspaper world of Chicago. At that time, although I did not know it, Chicago was in the heyday of its newspaper prestige. Some of the nation's most remarkable editors, publishers and newspaper writers were at work there: Melville E. Stone, afterward general manager of the Associated Press; Victor F. Lawson, publisher of the *Daily News*; Joseph Medill, editor and publisher of the *Tribune*; Eugene Field, managing editor of the *Morning Record*; William Penn Nixon, editor and publisher of the *Inter-Ocean*; George Ade; Finley Peter Dunne; Brand Whitlock; and a score of others subsequently to become well known.

Having made up my mind that I must be a newspaper man, I made straight for the various offices at noon and at six o'clock each day to ask if there was anything I could do. Very soon I succeeded in making my way into the presence of the various city and managing editors of all the papers in Chicago, with the result that they surveyed me with the cynical fishy eye peculiar to newspaper men and financiers and told me there was nothing.

One day in the office of the *Daily News* a tall, shambling, awkward-looking man in a brown flannel shirt, without coat or waistcoat, suspenders down, was pointed out to me by an office boy who saw him slipping past the city editorial door.

"Wanta know who dat is?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied humbly, grateful even for the attention of office boys.

"Well, dat's Eugene Field. Heard o' him, ain'tcha?"

"Sure," I said, recalling the bundle of incoherent MS. which I had once thrust upon him. I surveyed his retreating figure with envy and some nervousness, fearing he might psychically detect that I was the perpetrator of that unsolicited slush and abuse me then and there.

In spite of my energy, manifested for one solid week between

the hours of twelve and two at noon and five-thirty and seven at night I got nothing. Indeed it seemed to me as I went about these newspaper offices that they were the strangest, coldest, most haphazard and impractical of places. Gone was that fine ambassadorial quality with which a few months before I had invested them. These rooms, as I now saw, were crowded with commonplace desks and lamps, the floors strewn with newspapers. Office boys and hirelings gazed at you in the most unfriendly manner, asked what you wanted and insisted that there was nothing—they who knew nothing. By office boys I was told to come after one or two in the afternoon or after seven at night, when all assignments had been given out, and when I did so I was told that there was nothing and would be nothing. I began to feel desperate.

Just about this time I had an inspiration. I determined that, instead of trying to see all of the editors each day and missing most of them at the vital hour, I would select one paper and see if in some way I could not worm myself into the good graces of its editor. I now had the very sensible notion that a small paper would probably receive me with more consideration than one of the great ones, and out of them all chose the *Daily Globe*, a struggling affair financed by one of the Chicago politicians for political purposes only.

You have perhaps seen a homeless cat hang about a doorstep for days and days meowing to be taken in: that was I. The door in this case was a side door and opened upon an alley. Inside was a large, bare room filled with a few rows of tables set end to end, with a railing across the northern one-fourth, behind which sat the city editor, the dramatic and sporting editors, and one editorial writer. Outside this railing, near the one window, sat a large, fleshy gelatinous, round-faced round-headed young man wearing gold-rimmed spectacles. He had a hard, keen, cynical eye, and at first glance seemed to be most vitally opposed to me and everybody else. As it turned out, he was the *Daily Globe's* copy-reader. Nothing was said to me at first as I sat in my far corner waiting for something to turn up. By degrees some of the reporters began to talk to me, thinking I was a member of the staff, which eased my position a little during this time. I noticed that as soon as all the reporters had gone the city editor became most genial with the one editorial writer, who sat next him, and the two often went off together for a bite.

Parlous and yet delicious hours! Although I felt all the time as

though I were on the edge of some great change, still no one seemed to want me. The city editor, when I approached after all the others had gone, would shake his head and say: "Nothing today. There's not a thing in sight," but not roughly or harshly, and therein lay my hope. So here I would sit, reading the various papers or trying to write out something I had seen. I was always on the alert for some accident that I might report to this city editor in the hope that he had not seen it, but I encountered nothing.

The ways of advancement are strange, so often purely accidental. I did not know it, but my mere sitting here in this fashion eventually proved a card in my favor. A number of the employed reporters, of whom there were eight or nine (the best papers carried from twenty to thirty), seeing me sit about from twelve to two and thinking I was employed here also, struck up occasional genial and enlightening conversations with me. Reporters rarely know the details of staff arrangements or changes. Some of them, finding that I was only seeking work, ignored me; others gave me a bit of advice. Why didn't I see Selig of the *Tribune*, or Herbst of the *Herald*? It was rumored that staff changes were to be made there. One youth learning that I had never written a line for a newspaper, suggested that I go to the editor of the City Press Association or the United Press, where the most inexperienced beginners were put to work at the rate of eight dollars a week. This did not suit me at all. I felt that I could write.

Finally, however, my mere sitting about in this fashion brought me into contact with that copy-reader I have described, John Maxwell, who remarked one day out of mere curiosity:

"Are you doing anything special for the *Globe*?"

"No," I replied.

"Just looking for work?"

"Yes."

"Ever work on any paper?"

"No."

"How do you know you can write?"

"I don't. I just feel that I can. I want to see if I can't get a chance to try."

He looked at me, curiously, amusedly, cynically.

"Don't you ever go around to the other papers?"

"Yes, after I find out there's nothing here."

He smiled. "How long have you been coming here like this?"

"Two weeks."

“Every day?”

“Every day.”

He laughed now, a genial, rolling, fat laugh.

“Why do you pick the *Globe*? Don’t you know it’s the poorest paper in Chicago?”

“That’s why I pick it,” I replied innocently. “I thought I might get a chance here.”

“Oh, you did!” he laughed. “Well, you may be right at that. Hang around. You may get something. Now I’ll tell you something: this National Democratic Convention will open in June. They’ll have to take on a few new men here then. I can’t see why they shouldn’t give you a chance as well as anybody else. But it’s a hell of a business to be wanting to get into,” he added.

He began taking off his coat and waistcoat, rolling up his sleeves, sharpening his blue pencils and taking up stacks of copy. The while I merely stared at him. Every now and then he would look at me through his round glasses as though I were some strange animal. I grew restless and went out. But after that he greeted me each day in a friendly way, and because he seemed inclined to talk I stayed and talked with him.

What it was that finally drew us together in a minor bond of friendship I have never been able to discover. I am sure he considered me of little intellectual or reportorial import and yet also I gathered that he liked me a little. He seemed to take a fancy to me from the moment of our first conversation and included me in what I might call the *Globe* family spirit. He was interested in politics, literature, and the newspaper life of Chicago. Bit by bit he informed me as to the various editors, who were the most successful newspaper men, how some reporters did police, some politics, and some just general news. From him I learned that every paper carried a sporting editor, a society editor, a dramatic editor, a political man. There were managing editors, Sunday editors, city editors, copy-readers and editorial writers, all of whom seemed to me marvelous—men of the very greatest import. And they earned—which was more amazing still—salaries ranging from eighteen to thirty-five and even sixty and seventy dollars a week. From him I learned that this newspaper world was a seething maelstrom in which clever men struggled and fought as elsewhere; that some rose and many fell; that there was a roving element among newspaper men that drifted from city to city, many drinking themselves out of countenance, others settling down somewhere into some fortunate berth. Before long he told me that only recently he had

been copy-reader on the *Chicago Times* but due to what he characterized as "office politics," a term the meaning of which I in no wise grasped, he had been jockeyed out of his place. He seemed to think that by and large newspaper men while interesting and in some cases able, were tricky and shifty and above all, disturbingly and almost heartlessly inconsiderate of each other. Being young and inexperienced this point of view made no impression on me whatsoever. If I thought anything I thought that he must be wrong, or that, at any rate, this heartlessness would never trouble me in any way, being the live and industrious person that I was.

It made me happy to know that whether or not I was taken on I had at least achieved one friend at court. Maxwell advised me to stick.

"You'll get on," he said a day or two later. "I believe you've got the stuff in you. Maybe I can help you. You'll probably be like every other damned newspaper man once you get a start: an ingrate; but I'll help you just the same. Hang around. That convention will begin in three or four weeks now. I'll speak a good word for you, unless you tie up with some other paper before then."

And to my astonishment really, he was as good as his word. He must have spoken to the city editor soon after this, for the latter asked me what I had been doing and told me to hang around in case something should turn up. . . . On the day the newspapers were beginning to chronicle the advance arrival of various leaders from all parts of the country, I was taken on at fifteen dollars a week, for a week or two anyhow, and assigned to watch the committee rooms in the hotels Palmer, Grand Pacific, Auditorium and Richelieu.

*Newspaper Days, 1922*

# *I Was Marching*

MERIDEL LE SUEUR

## I

I have never been in a strike before. It is like looking at something that is happening for the first time and there are no thoughts and no words yet accrued to it. If you come from the middle class, words are likely to mean more than an event. You are likely to think about a thing, and the happening will be the size of a pin point and the words around the happening very large, distorting it queerly. It's a case of "Remembrance of things past." When you are in the event, you are likely to have a distinctly individualistic attitude, to be only partly there, and to care more for the happening afterwards than when it is happening. That is why it is hard for a person like myself . . . to be in a strike.

Besides, in American life, you hear things happening in a far and muffled way. One thing is said and another happens. Our merchant society has been built upon a huge hypocrisy, a cut-throat competition which sets one man against another and at the same time an ideology mouthing such words as "Humanity," "Truth," the "Golden Rule," and such. Now in a crisis the word falls away and the skeleton of that action shows in terrific movement.

For two days I heard of the strike. I went by their headquarters, I walked by on the opposite side of the street and saw the dark old building that had been a garage and lean, dark young faces leaning from the upstairs windows. I had to go down there often. I looked in. I saw the huge black interior and live coals of living men moving restlessly and orderly, their eyes gleaming from their sweaty faces.

I saw cars leaving filled with grimy men, pickets going to the line, engines roaring out. I stayed close to the door, watching. I didn't go in. I was afraid they would put me out. After all, I could remain a spectator. A man wearing a polo hat kept going around with a large camera taking pictures.

I am putting down exactly how I felt, because I believe others of my class feel the same as I did. I believe it stands for an important psychic change that must take place in all. I saw many artists, writers, professionals, even business men and women standing

across the street, too, and I saw in their faces the same longings, the same fears.

The truth is I was afraid. Not of the physical danger at all, but an awful fright of mixing, of losing myself, of being unknown and lost. I felt inferior. I felt no one would know me there, that all I had been trained to excel in would go unnoticed. I can't describe what I felt, but perhaps it will come near it to say that I felt I excelled in competing with others and I knew instantly that these people were NOT competing at all, that they were acting in a strange, powerful trance of movement *together*. And I was filled with longing to act with them and with fear that I could not. I felt I was born out of every kind of life, thrown up alone, looking at other lonely people, a condition I had been in the habit of defending with various attitudes of cynicism, preciousness, defiance, and hatred.

Looking at that dark and lively building, massed with men, I knew my feelings to be those belonging to disruption, chaos, and disintegration and I felt their direct and awful movement, mute and powerful, drawing them into a close and glowing cohesion like a powerful conflagration in the midst of the city. And it filled me with fear and awe and at the same time hope. I knew this action to be prophetic and indicative of future actions and I wanted to be part of it.

Our life seems to be marked with a curious and muffled violence over America, but this action has always been in the dark, men and women dying obscurely, poor and poverty marked lives. But now from city to city runs this violence, into the open, and colossal happenings stand bare before our eyes: the street churning suddenly upon the pivot of mad violence, whole men suddenly spouting blood and running like living sieves, another holding a dangling arm shot squarely off, a tall youngster, running, tripping over his intestines, and one block away, in the burning sun, gay women shopping and a window dresser trying to decide whether to put green or red voile on a mannikin.

In these terrible happenings you cannot be neutral now. No one can be neutral in the face of bullets.

The next day, with sweat breaking out on my body, I walked past the three guards at the door. They said, "Let the women in. We need women." And I knew it was no joke.

## II

At first I could not see into the dark building. I felt many men coming and going, cars driving through. I had an awful impulse

to go into the office which I passed, and offer to do some special work. I saw a sign which said "Get your button." I saw they all had buttons with the date and the number of the union local. I didn't get a button. I wanted to be anonymous.

There seemed to be a current, running down the wooden stairs, towards the front of the building, into the street, which was massed with people, and back again. I followed the current up the old stairs packed closely with hot men and women. As I was going up I could look down and see the lower floor, the cars drawing up to await picket call, the hospital roped off on one side.

Upstairs men sat bolt upright in chairs asleep, their bodies flung in attitudes of peculiar violence of fatigue. A woman nursed her baby. Two young girls slept together on a cot, dressed in overalls. The voice of the loudspeaker filled the room. The immense heat pressed down from the flat ceiling. I stood up against the wall for an hour. No one paid any attention to me. The commissary was in back and the women came out sometimes and sat down, fanning themselves with their aprons and listening to the news over the loudspeaker. A huge man seemed hung on a tiny folding chair. Occasionally some one tiptoed over and brushed the flies off his face. His great head fell over and the sweat poured regularly from his forehead like a spring. I wondered why they took such care of him. They all looked at him tenderly as he slept. I learned later he was a leader on the picket line and had the scalps of more cops to his name than any other.

Three windows flanked the front. I walked over to the windows. A red-headed woman with a button saying, "Unemployed Council," was looking out. I looked out with her. A thick crowd stood in the heat below listening to the strike bulletin. We could look right into the windows of the smart club across the street. We could see people peering out of the windows half hidden.

I kept feeling they would put me out. No one paid any attention. The woman said without looking at me, nodding to the palatial house, "It sure is good to see the enemy plain like that." "Yes," I said. I saw that the club was surrounded by a steel picket fence higher than a man. "They know what they put that there fence there for," she said. "Yes," I said. "Well," she said, "I've got to get back to the kitchen. Is it ever hot?" The thermometer said ninety-nine. The sweat ran off us, burning our skins. "The boys'll be coming in," she said, "for their noon feed." She had a scarred face. "Boy, will it be a mad house?" "Do you need any help?" I said

eagerly. "Boy," she said, "some of us have been pouring coffee since two o'clock this morning, steady, without no let-up." She started to go. She didn't pay any special attention to me as an individual. She didn't seem to be thinking of me, she didn't seem to see me. I watched her go. I felt rebuffed, hurt. Then I saw instantly she didn't see me because she saw only what she was doing. I ran after her.

### III

I found the kitchen organized like a factory. Nobody asks my name. I am given a large butcher's apron. I realize I have never before worked anonymously. At first I feel strange and then I feel good. The forewoman sets me to washing tin cups. There are not enough cups. We have to wash fast and rinse them and set them up quickly for buttermilk and coffee as the line thickens and the men wait. A little shortish man who is a professional dishwasher is supervising. I feel I won't be able to wash tin cups, but when no one pays any attention except to see that there are enough cups I feel better.

The line grows heavy. The men are coming in from the picket line. Each woman has one thing to do. There is no confusion. I soon learn I am not supposed to help pour the buttermilk. I am not supposed to serve sandwiches. I am supposed to wash tin cups. I suddenly look around and realize all these women are from factories. I know they have learned this organization and specialization in the factory. I look at the round shoulders of the woman cutting bread next to me and I feel I know her. The cups are brought back, washed and put on the counter again. The sweat pours down our faces, but we forget about it.

Then I am changed and put to pouring coffee. At first I look at the men's faces and then I don't look any more. It seems I am pouring coffee for the same tense, dirty sweating face, the same body, the same blue shirt and overalls. Hours go by, the heat is terrific. I am not tired. I am not hot. I am pouring coffee. I am swung into the most intense and natural organization I have ever felt. I know everything that is going on. These things become of great matter to me.

Eyes looking, hands raising a thousand cups, throats burning, eyes bloodshot from lack of sleep, the body dilated to catch every sound over the whole city. Buttermilk? Coffee?

"Is your man here?" the woman cutting sandwiches asks me.

“No,” I say, then I lie for some reason, peering around as if looking eagerly for someone, “I don’t see him now.”

But I was pouring coffee for living men.

IV

For a long time, about one o’clock, it seemed like something was about to happen. Women seemed to be pouring into headquarters to be near their men. You could hear only lies over the radio. And lies in the paper. Nobody knew precisely what was happening, but everyone thought something would happen in a few hours. You could feel the men being poured out of the hall onto the picket line. Every few minutes cars left and more drew up and were filled. The voice at the loudspeaker was accelerated, calling for men, calling for picket cars.

I could hear the men talking about the arbitration board, the rule that was supposed to be maintained while the board sat with the Governor. They listened to every word over the loudspeaker. A terrible communal excitement ran through the hall like a fire through a forest. I could hardly breathe. I seemed to have no body at all except the body of this excitement. I felt that what had happened before had not been a real movement, these false words and actions had taken place on the periphery. The real action was about to show, the real intention.

We kept on pouring thousands of cups of coffee, feeding thousands of men.

The chef with a woman tattooed on his arm was just dishing the last of the stew. It was about two o’clock. The commissary was about empty. We went into the front hall. It was drained of men. The chairs were empty. The voice of the announcer was excited. “The men are massed at the market,” he said. “Something is going to happen.” I sat down beside a woman who was holding her hands tightly together, leaning forward listening, her eyes bright and dilated. I had never seen her before. She took my hands. She pulled me towards her. She was crying. “It’s awful,” she said. “Something awful is going to happen. They’ve taken both my children away from me and now something is going to happen to all those men.” I held her hands. She had a green ribbon around her hair.

The action seemed reversed. The cars were coming back. The announcer cried, “This is murder.” Cars were coming in. I don’t know how we got to the stairs. Everyone seemed to be converging

at a menaced point. I saw below the crowd stirring, uncoiling. I saw them taking men out of cars and putting them on the hospital cots, on the floor. At first I felt frightened, the close black area of the barn, the blood, the heavy movement, the sense of myself lost, gone. But I couldn't have turned away now. A woman clung to my hand. I was pressed against the body of another. If you are to understand anything you must understand it in the muscular event, in actions we have not been trained for. Something broke all my surfaces in something that was beyond horror, and I was dabbing alcohol on the gaping wounds that buckshot makes, hanging open like crying mouths. Buckshot wounds splay in the body and then swell like a blow. Ness, who died, had thirty-eight slugs in his body, in the chest and in the back.

The picket cars keep coming in. Some men have walked back from the market, holding their own blood in. They move in a great explosion, and the newness of the movement makes it seem like something under ether, moving terrifically towards a culmination.

From all over the city workers are coming. They gather outside in two great half circles, cut in two to let the ambulances in. A traffic cop is still directing traffic at the corner, and the crowd cannot stand to see him. "We'll give you just two seconds to beat it," they tell him. He goes away quickly. A striker takes over the street.

Men, women, and children are massing outside, a living circle close packed for protection. From the tall office building business men are looking down on that black swarm thickening, coagulating into what action they cannot tell.

We have living blood on our skirts.

v

That night at eight o'clock a mass meeting was called of all labor. It was to be in a parking lot two blocks from headquarters. All the women gather at the front of the building with collection cans, ready to march to the meeting. I have not been home. It never occurs to me to leave. The twilight is eerie and the men are saying that the chief of police is going to attack the meeting and raid headquarters. The smell of blood hangs in the hot, still air. Rumors strike at the taut nerves. The dusk looks ghastly with what might be in the next half hour.

"If you have any children," a woman said to me, "you better

not go." I looked at the desperate women's faces, the broken feet, the torn and hanging pelvis, the worn and lovely bodies of women who persist under such desperate labors. I shivered, though it was 96 and the sun had been down a good hour.

The parking lot was already full of people when we got there, and men swarmed the adjoining roofs. An elegant café stood across the street with water sprinkling from its roof, and splendidly dressed men and women stood on the steps as if looking at a show.

The platform was the bullet-riddled truck of the afternoon's fray. We had been told to stand close to this platform, and we did, making the center of a wide massed circle that stretched as far as we could see. We seemed buried like minerals in a mass, packed body to body. I felt again that peculiar heavy silence in which there is the real form of the happening. My eyes burn. I can hardly see. I seem to be standing like an animal in ambush. I have the brightest, most physical feeling with every sense sharpened peculiarly. The movements, the masses that I see and feel I have never known before. I only partly know what I am seeing, feeling, but I feel it is the real body and gesture of a future vitality. I see that there is a bright clot of women drawn close to a bullet-riddled truck. I am one of them, yet I don't feel myself at all. It is curious; I feel most alive and yet for the first time in my life I do not feel myself as separate. I realize then that all my previous feelings have been based on feeling myself separate and distinct from others, and now I sense sharply faces, bodies, closeness, and my own fear is not my own alone nor my hope.

The strikers keep moving up cars. We keep moving back together to let cars pass and form between us and a brick building that flanks the parking lot. They are connecting the loudspeaker, testing it. Yes, they are moving up lots of cars through the crowd, and lining them closely side by side. There must be ten thousand people now, heat rising from them. They are standing silent, watching the platform, watching the cars being brought up. The silence seems terrific, like a great form moving of itself. This is real movement issuing from the close reality of mass feeling. This is the first real rhythmic movement I have ever seen. My heart hammers terrifically. My hands are swollen and hot. No one is producing this movement. It is a movement upon which all are moving softly, rhythmically, terribly.

No matter how many times I looked at what was happening I hardly knew what I saw. I looked and I saw time and time again

that there were men standing close to us, around us, and then suddenly I knew that there was a living chain of men standing shoulder to shoulder, forming a circle around the group of women. They stood shoulder to shoulder, slightly moving like a thick vine from the pressure behind, but standing tightly woven like a living wall, moving gently.

I saw that the cars were now lined one close fitted to the other with strikers sitting on the roofs and closely packed on the running boards. They could see far over the crowd. "What are they doing that for?" I said. No one answered. The wide dilated eyes of the women were like my own. No one seemed to be answering questions now. They simply spoke, cried out, moved together now.

The last car drove in slowly, the crowd letting them through without command or instruction. "A little closer," someone said. "Be sure they are close." Men sprang up to direct whatever action was needed and then subsided again, and no one had noticed who it was. They stepped forward to direct a needed action and then fell anonymously back again.

We all watched carefully the placing of the cars. Sometimes we looked at each other. I didn't understand that look. I felt uneasy. It was as if something escaped me. And then suddenly, on my very body, I knew what they were doing, as if it had been communicated to me from a thousand eyes, a thousand silent throats, as if it had been shouted in the loudest voice.

THEY WERE BUILDING A BARRICADE.

## VI

Two men died from that day's shooting. Men lined up to give one of them a blood transfusion, but he died. Black Friday, men called the murderous day. Night and day workers held their children up to see the body of Ness who died. Tuesday, the day of the funeral, one thousand more militia were massed downtown.

It was still over ninety in the shade. I went to the funeral parlors and thousands of men and women were massed there waiting in the terrific sun. One block of women and children were standing two hours waiting. I went over and stood near them. I didn't know whether I could march. I didn't like marching in parades. Besides, I felt they might not want me.

I stood aside not knowing if I would march. I couldn't see how they would ever organize it anyway. No one seemed to be doing much.

At three-forty some command went down the ranks. I said foolishly at the last minute, "I don't belong to the auxiliary—could I march?" Three women drew me in. "We want all to march," they said gently. "Come with us."

The giant mass uncoiled like a serpent and straightened out ahead, and to my amazement on a lift of road I could see six blocks of massed men, four abreast, with bare heads, moving straight on and as they moved, uncoiled the mass behind and pulled it after them. I felt myself walking, accelerating my speed with the others as the line stretched, pulled taut, then held its rhythm.

Not a cop was in sight. The cortège moved through the stop-and-go signs; it seemed to lift of its own dramatic rhythm, coming from the intention of every person there. We were moving spontaneously in a movement, natural, hardy, and miraculous.

We passed through six blocks of tenements, through a sea of grim faces, and there was not a sound. There was the curious shuffle of thousands of feet, without drum or bugle, in ominous silence, a march not heavy as the military, but very light, exactly with the heartbeat.

I was marching with a million hands, movements, faces, and my own movement was repeating again and again, making a new movement from these many gestures, the walking, falling back, the open mouth crying, the nostrils stretched apart, the raised hand, the blow falling, and the outstretched hand drawing me in.

I felt my legs straighten. I felt my feet join in that strange shuffle of thousands of bodies moving with direction, of thousands of feet and my own breath with the gigantic breath. As if an electric charge had passed through me, my hair stood on end. I was marching.

*The New Masses*, September 18, 1934

# The Middle West

FREDERICK J. TURNER

American sectional nomenclature is still confused. Once "the West" described the whole region beyond the Alleghanies; but the term has hopelessly lost its definiteness. The rapidity of the spread of settlement has broken down old usage, and as yet no substitute has been generally accepted. The "Middle West" is a term variously used by the public, but for the purpose of the present paper, it will be applied to that region of the United States included in the census reports under the name of the North Central division, comprising the States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin (the old "Territory Northwest of the River Ohio"), and their trans-Mississippi sisters of the Louisiana Purchase,—Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. It is an imperial domain. If the greater countries of Central Europe,—France, Germany, Italy, and Austro-Hungary,—were laid down upon this area, the Middle West would still show a margin of spare territory. Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Buffalo constitute its gateways to the Eastern States; Kansas City, Omaha, St. Paul-Minneapolis, and Duluth-Superior dominate its western areas; Cincinnati and St. Louis stand on its southern borders; and Chicago reigns at the center. What Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore are to the Atlantic seaboard these cities are to the Middle West. The Great Lakes and the Mississippi, with the Ohio and the Missouri as laterals, constitute the vast water system that binds the Middle West together. It is the economic and political center of the Republic. At one edge is the Populism of the prairies; at the other, the capitalism that is typified in Pittsburgh. Great as are the local differences within the Middle West, it possesses, . . . in the history of its settlement, and in its economic and social life, a unity and interdependence which warrant a study of the area as an entity. . . .

It would be impossible within the limits of this paper to detail the history of the occupation of the Middle West; but the larger aspects of the flow of population into the region may be sketched. . . . By the opening of the nineteenth century, when Napoleon's cession brought to the United States the vast spaces of the Louisiana Purchase beyond the Mississippi, the pioneers had hardly more

than entered the outskirts of the forest along the Ohio and Lake Erie. But by 1810 the government had extinguished the Indian title to the unsecured portions of the Western Reserve, and to great tracts of Indiana, along the Ohio and up the Wabash Valley; thus protecting the Ohio highway from the Indians, and opening new lands to settlement. The embargo had destroyed the trade of New England, and had weighted down her citizens with debt and taxation; caravans of Yankee emigrant wagons, precursors of the "prairie schooner," had already begun to cross Pennsylvania on their way to Ohio; and they now greatly increased in number. North Carolina back countrymen flocked to the Indiana settlements, giving the peculiar Hoosier flavor to the State, and other Southerners followed, outnumbering the Northern immigrants, who sought the eastern edge of Indiana.

Tecumthe, rendered desperate by the advance into his hunting grounds, took up the hatchet, made wide-reaching alliances among the Indians, and turned to England for protection. The Indian war merged into the War of 1812, and the settlers strove in vain to add Canadian lands to their empire. In the diplomatic negotiations that followed the war, England made another attempt to erect the Old Northwest beyond the Greenville line into a permanent Indian barrier between Canada and the United States; but the demand was refused, and by the treaties of 1818, the Indians were pressed still farther north. In the meantime, Indian treaties had released additional land in southern Illinois, and pioneers were widening the bounds of the old French settlements. Avoiding the rich savannas of the prairie regions, as devoid of wood, remote from transportation facilities, and suited only to grazing, they entered the hard woods—and in the early twenties they were advancing in a wedge-shaped column up the Illinois Valley.

The Southern element constituted the main portion of this phalanx of ax-bearers. Abraham Lincoln's father joined the throng of Kentuckians that entered the Indiana woods in 1816, and the boy, when he had learned to hew out a forest home, betook himself, in 1830, to Sangamon county, Illinois. He represents the pioneer of the period; but his ax sank deeper than other men's, and the plaster cast of his great sinewy hand, at Washington, embodies the training of these frontier railsplitters, in the days when Fort Dearborn, on the site of Chicago, was but a military outpost in a desolate country. While the hard woods of Illinois were being entered, the pioneer movement passed also into the Missouri Valley. The French lead miners had already opened the southeastern

section, and Southern mountaineers had pushed up the Missouri; but now the planters from the Ohio Valley and the upper Tennessee followed, seeking the alluvial soils for slave labor. Moving across the southern border of free Illinois, they had awakened regrets in that State at the loss of so large a body of settlers.

Looking at the Middle West, as a whole, in the decade from 1810 to 1820, we perceive that settlement extended from the shores of Lake Erie in an arc, following the banks of the Ohio till it joined the Mississippi, and thence along that river and up the Missouri well into the center of the State. The next decade was marked by the increased use of the steamboat; pioneers pressed farther up the streams, etching out the hard wood forests well up to the prairie lands, and forming additional tracts of settlement in the region tributary to Detroit and in the southeastern part of Michigan. In the area of the Galena lead mines of northwestern Illinois, southwestern Wisconsin, and northeastern Iowa, Southerners had already begun operations; and if we except Ohio and Michigan, the dominant element in all this overflow of settlement into the Middle West was Southern, particularly from Kentucky, Virginia, and North Carolina. The settlements were still dependent on the rivers for transportation, and the areas between the rivers were but lightly occupied. The Mississippi constituted the principal outlet for the products of the Middle West; Pittsburgh furnished most of the supplies for the region, but New Orleans received its crops. The Old National road was built piecemeal, and too late, as a whole, to make a great artery of trade throughout the Middle West, in this early period; but it marked the northern borders of the Southern stream of population, running, as this did, through Columbus, Indianapolis, and Vandalia.

The twenty years from 1830 to 1850 saw great changes in the composition of the population of the Middle West. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 was an epoch-making event. It furnished a new outlet and inlet for northwestern traffic; Buffalo began to grow, and New York City changed from a local market to a great commercial center. But even more important was the place which the canal occupied as the highway for a new migration.

In the march of the New England people from the coast, three movements are of especial importance: the advance from the seaboard up the Connecticut and Housatonic Valleys through Massachusetts and into Vermont; the advance thence to central and western New York; and the advance to the interior of the Old Northwest. The second of these stages occupied the generation

from about 1790 to 1820; after that the second generation was ready to seek new lands; and these the Erie Canal and lake navigation opened to them, and to the Vermonters and other adventurous spirits of New England. It was this combined New York-New England stream that in the thirties poured in large volume into the zone north of the settlements which have been described. The newcomers filled in the southern counties of Michigan and Wisconsin, the northern counties of Illinois, and parts of the northern and central areas of Indiana. Pennsylvania and Ohio sent a similar type of people to the area adjacent to those States. In Iowa a stream combined of the Southern element and of these settlers sought the wooded tributaries of the Mississippi in the southeastern part of the State. In default of legal authority, in this early period, they formed squatter governments and land associations, comparable to the action of the Massachusetts men who in the first third of the seventeenth century "squatted" in the Connecticut Valley.

A great forward movement had occurred, which took possession of oak openings and prairies, gave birth to the cities of Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Minneapolis, as well as to a multitude of lesser cities, and replaced the dominance of the Southern element by that of a modified Puritan stock. The railroad system of the early fifties bound the Mississippi to the North Atlantic seaboard; New Orleans gave way to New York as the outlet for the Middle West, and the day of river settlement was succeeded by the era of inter-river settlement and railway transportation. The change in the political and social ideals was at least equal to the change in economic connections, and together these forces made an intimate organic union between New England, New York, and the newly settled West. In estimating the New England influence in the Middle West, it must not be forgotten that the New York settlers were mainly New Englanders of a later generation.

Combined with the streams from the East came the German migration into the Middle West. Over half a million, mainly from the Palatinate, Würtemberg, and the adjacent regions, sought America between 1830 and 1850, and nearly a million more Germans came in the next decade. The larger portion of these went into the Middle West; they became pioneers in the newer parts of Ohio, especially along the central ridge, and in Cincinnati; they took up the hardwood lands of the Wisconsin counties along Lake Michigan; and they came in important numbers to Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan, and to the river towns of Iowa. The migration in

the thirties and forties contained an exceptionally large proportion of educated and forceful leaders, men who had struggled in vain for the ideal of a liberal German nation, and who contributed important intellectual forces to the communities in which they settled. The Germans, as a whole, furnished a conservative and thrifty agricultural element to the Middle West. In some of their social ideals they came into collision with the Puritan element from New England, and the outcome of the steady contest has been a compromise. Of all the States, Wisconsin has been most deeply influenced by the Germans. . . .

[In the decade before the Civil War], not only did the density of settlement increase in the older portions of the region, but new waves of colonization passed into the remoter prairies. Iowa's pioneers, after Indian cessions had been secured, spread well toward her western limits. Minnesota, also, was recruited by a column of pioneers. The treaty of Traverse de Sioux, in 1851, opened over twenty million acres of arable land in that State, and Minnesota increased her population 2730.7 per cent in the decade from 1850 to 1860.

Up to this decade the pine belt of the Middle West, in northern Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota had been the field of operations of Indian traders. At first under English companies, and afterward under Astor's American Fur Company, the traders with their French and half-breed boatmen skirted the Great Lakes and followed the rivers into the forests, where they stationed their posts and spread goods and whiskey among the Indians. Their posts were centers of disintegration among the savages. The new wants and the demoralization which resulted from the Indian trade facilitated the purchases of their lands by the federal government. The trader was followed by the seeker for the best pine land "forties"; and by the time of the Civil War the exploitation of the pine belt had fairly begun. The Irish and Canadian choppers, followed by the Scandinavians, joined the forest men, and log drives succeeded the trading canoe. Men from the pine woods of Maine and Vermont directed the industry, and became magnates in the mill towns that grew up in the forests,—millionaires, and afterwards political leaders. In the prairie country of the Middle West, the Indian trade that centered at St. Louis had been important ever since 1820, with an influence upon the Indians of the plains similar to the influence of the northern fur trade upon the Indians of the forest. By 1840 the removal policy had effected the transfer of most of the eastern tribes to lands across the

Mississippi. Tribal names that formerly belonged to Ohio and the rest of the Old Northwest were found on the map of the Kansas Valley. The Platte country belonged to the Pawnee and their neighbors, and to the north along the Upper Missouri were the Sioux, or Dakota, Crow, Cheyenne, and other horse Indians, following the vast herds of buffalo that grazed on the Great Plains. The discovery of California gold and the opening of the Oregon country, in the middle of the century, made it necessary to secure a road through the Indian lands for the procession of pioneers that crossed the prairies to the Pacific. The organization of Kansas and Nebraska, in 1854, was the first step in the withdrawal of these territories from the Indians. A period of almost constant Indian hostility followed, for the savage lords of the boundless prairies instinctively felt the significance of the entrance of the farmer into their empire. In Minnesota the Sioux took advantage of the Civil War to rise; but the outcome was the destruction of their reservations in that State, and the opening of great tracts to the pioneers. When the Pacific railways were begun, Red Cloud, the astute Sioux chief, who, in some ways, stands as the successor of Pontiac and of Tecumthe, rallied the principal tribes of the Great Plains to resist the march of civilization. Their hostility resulted in the peace measure of 1867 and 1868, which assigned to the Sioux and their allies reservations embracing the major portion of Dakota territory, west of the Missouri River. The systematic slaughter of millions of buffalo, in the years between 1866 and 1873, for the sake of their hides, put an end to the vast herds of the Great Plains, and destroyed the economic foundation of the Indians. Henceforth they were dependent on the whites for their food supply, and the Great Plains were open to the cattle ranchers.

In a preface written in 1872 for a new edition of "The Oregon Trail," which had appeared in 1847, Francis Parkman said, "The wild cavalcade that defiled with me down the gorges of the Black Hills, with its paint and war plumes, fluttering trophies and savage embroidery, bows, arrows, lances, and shields, will never be seen again." The prairies were ready for the final rush of occupation. The homestead law of 1862, passed in the midst of the war, did not reveal its full importance as an element in the settlement of the Middle West until after peace. It began to operate most actively, contemporaneously with the development of the several railways to the Pacific, in the two decades from 1870 to 1890, and in connection with the marketing of the railroad land grants. The outcome was an epoch-making extension of population.

Before 1870 the vast and fertile valley of the Red River, once the level bed of an ancient lake, occupying the region where North Dakota and Minnesota meet, was almost virgin soil. But in 1875 the great Dalrymple farm showed its advantages for wheat raising, and a tide of farm seekers turned to the region. The "Jim River" Valley of South Dakota attracted still other settlers. The Northern Pacific and the Great Northern Railway thrust out laterals into these Minnesota and Dakota wheat areas from which to draw the nourishment for their daring passage to the Pacific. The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul, the Chicago and Northwestern Railway, Burlington, and other roads, gridironed the region; and the unoccupied lands of the Middle West were taken up by a migration that in its system and scale is unprecedented. The railroads sent their agents and their literature everywhere, "booming" the "Golden West"; the opportunity for economic and political fortunes in such rapidly growing communities attracted multitudes of Americans whom the cheap land alone would not have tempted. In 1870 the Dakotas had 14,000 settlers; in 1890 they had over 510,000. Nebraska's population was 28,000 in 1860; 123,000 in 1870; 452,000 in 1880; and 1,059,000 in 1890. Kansas had 107,000 in 1860; 364,000 in 1870; 996,000 in 1880; and 1,427,000 in 1890. Wisconsin and New York gave the largest fractions of the native element to Minnesota; Illinois and Ohio together sent perhaps one-third of the native element of Kansas and Nebraska, but the Missouri and Southern settlers were strongly represented in Kansas; Wisconsin, New York, Minnesota and Iowa gave North Dakota the most of her native settlers; and Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, and New York did the same for South Dakota.

Railroads and steamships organized foreign immigration on scale and system never before equaled; a high-water mark of American immigration came in the early eighties. Germans and Scandinavians were rushed by emigrant trains out to the prairies, to fill the remaining spaces in the older States of the Middle West. The census of 1890 showed in Minnesota 373,000 persons of Scandinavian parentage, and out of the total million and one half persons of Scandinavian parentage in the United States, the Middle West received all but about three hundred thousand. The persons of German parentage in the Middle West numbered over four millions out of a total of less than seven millions in the whole country. The province had, in 1890, a smaller proportion of persons of foreign parentage than had the North Atlantic division, but the proportions varied greatly in the different States. Indiana had the

lowest percentage, 20.38; and, rising in the scale, Missouri had 24.94; Kansas 26.75; Ohio 33.93; Nebraska 42.45; Iowa 43.57; Illinois 49.01; Michigan 54.58; Wisconsin 73.65; Minnesota 75.37; and North Dakota 78.87.

What these statistics of settlement mean when translated into the pioneer life of the prairie, cannot be told here. There were sharp contrasts with the pioneer life of the Old Northwest; for the forest shade, there was substituted the boundless prairie; the sod house for the log hut; the continental railway for the old National Turnpike and the Erie Canal. Life moved faster, in larger masses, and with greater momentum in this pioneer movement. The horizon line was more remote. Things were done in the gross. The transcontinental railroad, the bonanza farm, the steam plow, harvester, and thresher, the "league-long furrow," and the vast cattle ranches, all suggested spacious combination and systematization of industry. The largest hopes were excited by these conquests of the prairie. The occupation of western Kansas may illustrate the movement which went on also in the west of Nebraska and the Dakotas. The pioneer farmer tried to push into the region with the old methods of settlement. Deceived by rainy seasons and the railroad advertisements, and recklessly optimistic, hosts of settlers poured out into the plains beyond the region of sufficient rainfall for successful agriculture without irrigation. Dry seasons starved them back; but a repetition of good rainfalls again aroused the determination to occupy the western plains. Boom towns flourished like prairie weeds; Eastern capital struggled for a chance to share in the venture, and the Kansas farmers eagerly mortgaged their possessions to secure the capital so freely offered for their attack on the arid lands. By 1887 the tide of the pioneer farmers had flowed across the semi-arid plains to the western boundary of the State. But it was a hopeless effort to conquer a new province by the forces that had won the prairies. The wave of settlement dashed itself in vain against the conditions of the Great Plains. The native American farmer had received his first defeat; farm products at the same period had depreciated, and he turned to the national government for reinforcements.

The Populistic movement of the western half of the Middle West is a complex of many forces. In some respects it is the latest manifestation of the same forces that brought on the crisis of 1837 in the earlier region of pioneer exploitation. That era of over-confidence, reckless internal improvements, and land purchases by borrowed capital, brought a reaction when it became apparent that the

future had been overdiscounted. But, in that time, there were the farther free lands to which the ruined pioneer could turn. The demand for an expansion of the currency has marked each area of Western advance. The greenback movement of Ohio and the eastern part of the Middle West grew into the fiat money, free silver, and land bank propositions of the Populists across the Mississippi. Efforts for cheaper transportation also appear in each stage of Western advance. When the pioneer left the rivers and had to haul his crops by wagon to a market, the transportation factor determined both his profits and the extension of settlement. Demands for national aid to roads and canals had marked the pioneer advance of the first third of the century. The "Granger" attacks upon the railway rates, and in favor of governmental regulation, marked a second advance of Western settlement. The Farmers' Alliance and the Populist demand for government ownership of the railroad is a phase of the same effort of the pioneer farmer, on his latest frontier. The proposals have taken increasing proportions in each region of Western Advance. Taken as a whole, Populism is a manifestation of the old pioneer ideals of the native American, with the added element of increasing readiness to utilize the national government to effect its ends. This is not unnatural in a section whose lands were originally purchased by the government and given away to its settlers by the same authority, whose railroads were built largely by federal land grants, and whose settlements were protected by the United States army and governed by the national authority until they were carved into rectangular States and admitted into the Union. Its native settlers were drawn from many States, many of them former soldiers of the Civil War, who mingled in new lands with foreign immigrants accustomed to the vigorous authority of European national governments.

But these old ideals of the American pioneer, phrased in the new language of national power, did not meet with the assent of the East. Even in the Middle West a change of deepest import had been in progress during these years of prairie settlement. The agricultural preponderance of the country has passed to the prairies, and manufacturing has developed in the areas once devoted to pioneer farming. In the decade prior to the Civil War, the area of greatest wheat production passed from Ohio and the States to the east, into Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin; after 1880, the center of wheat growing moved across the Mississippi; and in 1890 the new settlements produced half the crop of the United States. The corn area shows a similar migration. In 1840 the Southern States produced

half the crop, and the Middle West one-fifth; by 1860 the situation was reversed and in 1890 nearly one-half the corn of the Union came from beyond the Mississippi. Thus the settlers of the Old Northwest and their crops have moved together across the Mississippi, and in the regions whence they migrated varied agriculture and manufacture have sprung up.

As these movements in population and products have passed across the Middle West, and as the economic life of the eastern border has been intensified, a huge industrial organism has been created in the province,—an organism of tremendous power, activity, and unity. Fundamentally the Middle West is an agricultural area unequalled for its combination of space, variety, productiveness, and freedom from interruption by deserts or mountains. The huge water system of the Great Lakes has become the highway of a mighty commerce. The Sault Ste. Marie Canal, although open but two-thirds of the year, is the channel of a traffic of greater tonnage than that which passes through the Suez Canal, and nearly all this commerce moves almost the whole length of the Great Lakes system; the chief ports being Duluth, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, and Buffalo. The transportation facilities of the Great Lakes were revolutionized after 1886, to supply the needs of commerce between the East and the newly developed lands of the Middle West; the tonnage doubled; wooden ships gave way to steel; sailing vessels yielded to steam; and huge docks, derricks, and elevators, triumphs of mechanical skill, were constructed. A competent investigator has lately declared that “there is probably in the world to-day no place at tide water where ship plates can be laid down for a less price than they can be manufactured or purchased at the lake ports.”

This rapid rise of the merchant marine of our inland seas has led to the demand for deep water canals to connect them with the ocean road to Europe. When the fleets of the Great Lakes plow the Atlantic, and when Duluth and Chicago become seaports, the water transportation of the Middle West will have completed its evolution. The significance of the development of the railway systems is not inferior to that of the great water way. Chicago has become the greatest railroad center of the world, nor is there another area of like size which equals this in its railroad facilities; all the forces of the nation intersect here. Improved terminals, steel rails, better rolling stock, and consolidation of railway systems have accompanied the advance of the people of the Middle West.

This unparalleled development of transportation facilities measures the magnitude of the material development of the province.

Its wheat and corn surplus supplies the deficit of the rest of the United States and much of that of Europe. Such is the agricultural condition of the province of which Monroe wrote to Jefferson, in 1786, in these words: "A great part of the territory is miserably poor, especially that near Lakes Michigan and Erie, and that upon the Mississippi and the Illinois consists of extensive plains which have not had, from appearances, and will not have, a single bush on them for ages. The districts, therefore, within which these fall will never contain a sufficient number of inhabitants to entitle them to membership in the confederacy."

Minneapolis and Duluth receive the spring wheat of the northern prairies, and after manufacturing great portions of it into flour, transmit it to Buffalo, the eastern cities, and to Europe. Chicago is still the great city of the corn belt, but its power as a milling and wheat center has been passing to the cities that receive tribute from the northern prairies. It lies in the region of winter wheat, corn, oats, and live stock. Kansas City, St. Louis, and Cincinnati are the sister cities of this zone, which reaches into the grazing country of the Great Plains. The meeting point of corn and cattle has led to the development of the packing industries,—large business systems that send the beef and pork of the region to supply the East and parts of Europe. The "feeding system" adopted in Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa, whereby the stock is fattened from the surplus corn of the region, constitutes a species of varied farming that has saved these States from the disasters of the failure of a single industry, and has been one solution of the economic life of the transition belt between the prairies and the Great Plains. Under a more complex agriculture, better adapted to the various sections of the State, and with better crops, Kansas has become more prosperous and less a center of political discontent.

While this development of the agricultural interests of the Middle West has been in progress, the exploitation of the pine woods of the north has furnished another contribution to the commerce of the province. The center of activity has migrated from Michigan to Minnesota, and the lumber traffic furnishes one of the principal contributions to the vessels that ply the Great Lakes and supply the tributary mills. As the white pine vanishes before the organized forces of exploitation, the remaining hard woods serve to establish factories in the former mill towns. The more fertile denuded lands of the north are now receiving settlers who repeat the old pioneer life among the stumps.

But the most striking development in the industrial history of

the Middle West in recent years has been due to the opening up of the iron mines of Lake Superior. Even in 1873 the Lake Superior ores furnished a quarter of the total production of American blast furnaces. The opening of the Gogebic mines in 1884, and the development of the Vermillion and Mesabi mines adjacent to the head of the lake, in the early nineties, completed the transfer of iron ore production to the Lake Superior region. Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin together now produce the ore for eighty per cent of the pig iron of the United States. Four-fifths of this great product moves to the ports on Lake Erie and the rest to the manufactories at Chicago and Milwaukee. The vast steel and iron industry that centers at Pittsburgh and Cleveland, with important outposts like Chicago and Milwaukee, is the outcome of the meeting of the coal of the eastern and southern borders of the province and of Pennsylvania, with the iron ores of the north. The industry has been systematized and consolidated by a few captains of industry. Steam shovels dig the ore from many of the Mesabi mines; gravity roads carry it to the docks and to the ships, and huge hoisting and carrying devices, built especially for the traffic, unload it for the railroad and the furnace. Iron and coal mines, transportation fleets, railroad systems, and iron manufactories are concentrated in a few corporations, principally the United States Steel Corporation. The world has never seen such a consolidation of capital and so complete a systematization of economic processes.

Such is the economic appearance of the Middle West a century after the pioneers left the frontier village of Pittsburgh and crossed the Ohio into the forests. De Tocqueville exclaimed, with reason, in 1833: "This gradual and continuous progress of the European race toward the Rocky Mountains has the solemnity of a providential event. It is like a deluge of men, rising unabatedly, and driven daily onward by the hand of God."

The ideals of the Middle West began in the log huts set in the midst of the forest a century ago. While his horizon was still bounded by the clearing that his ax had made, the pioneer dreamed of continental conquests. The vastness of the wilderness kindled his imagination. His vision saw beyond the dank swamp at the edge of the great lake to the lofty buildings and the jostling multitudes of a mighty city; beyond the rank, grass-clad prairie to the seas of golden grain; beyond the harsh life of the log hut and the sod house to the home of his children, where should dwell comfort and the higher things of life, though they might not be for him. The men and women who made the Middle West were idealists,

and they had the power of will to make their dreams come true. Here, also, were the pioneer's traits,—individual activity, inventiveness, and competition for the prizes of the rich province that awaited exploitation under freedom and equality of opportunity. He honored the man whose eye was the quickest and whose grasp was the strongest in this contest: it was “every one for himself.”

The early society of the Middle West was not a complex, highly differentiated and organized society. Almost every family was a self-sufficing unit, and liberty and equality flourished in the frontier periods of the Middle West as perhaps never before in history. American democracy came from the forest, and its destiny drove it to material conquests; but the materialism of the pioneer was not the dull contented materialism of an old and fixed society. Both native settler and European immigrant saw in this free and competitive movement of the frontier the chance to break the bondage of social rank, and to rise to a higher plane of existence. The pioneer was passionately desirous to secure for himself and for his family a favorable place in the midst of these large and free but vanishing opportunities. It took a century for this society to fit itself into the conditions of the whole province. Little by little, nature pressed into her mold the plastic pioneer life. The Middle West, yesterday a pioneer province, is to-day the field of industrial resources and systematization so vast that Europe, alarmed for her industries in competition with this new power, is discussing the policy of forming protective alliances among the nations of the continent. Into this region flowed the great forces of modern capitalism. Indeed, the region itself furnished favorable conditions for the creation of these forces, and trained many of the famous American industrial leaders. The Prairies, the Great Plains, and the Great Lakes furnished new standards of industrial measurement. From this society, seated amidst a wealth of material advantages, and breeding individualism, energetic competition, inventiveness, and spaciousness of design, came the triumph of the strongest. The captains of industry arose and seized on nature's gifts. Struggling with one another, increasing the scope of their ambitions as the largeness of the resources and the extent of the fields of activity revealed themselves, they were forced to accept the natural conditions of a province vast in area but simple in structure. Competition grew into consolidation. On the Pittsburgh border of the Middle West the completion of the process is most clearly seen. On the prairies of Kansas stands the Populist, a survival of the pioneer, striving to adjust present conditions to his old ideals.

The ideals of equality, freedom of opportunity, faith in the common man are deep rooted in all the Middle West. The frontier stage, through which each portion passed, left abiding traces on the older, as well as on the newer, areas of the province. Nor were these ideals limited to the native American settlers: Germans and Scandinavians who poured into the Middle West sought the country with like hopes and like faith. These facts must be remembered in estimating the effects of the economic transformation of the province upon its democracy. The peculiar democracy of the frontier has passed away with the conditions that produced it; but the democratic aspirations remain. They are held with passionate determination.

The task of the Middle West is that of adapting democracy to the vast economic organization of the present. This region which has so often needed the reminder that bigness is not greatness, may yet show that its training has produced the power to reconcile popular government and culture with the huge industrial society of the modern world. The democracies of the past have been small communities, under simple and primitive economic conditions. At bottom the problem is how to reconcile real greatness with bigness.

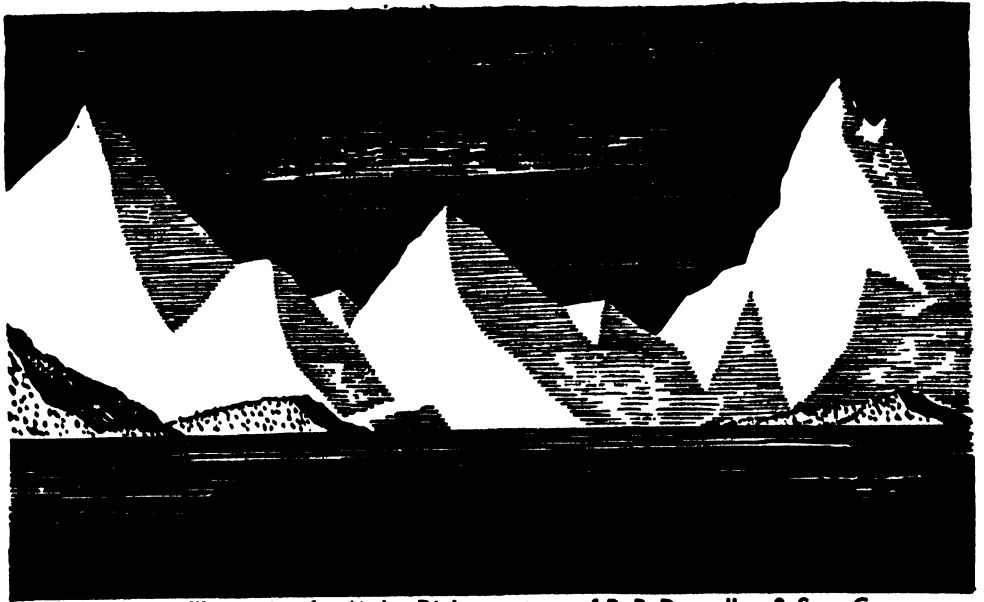
It is important that the Middle West should accomplish this; the future of the Republic is with her. Politically she is dominant, as is illustrated by the fact that six out of seven of the Presidents elected since 1860 have come from her borders. Twenty-six million people live in the Middle West as against twenty-one million in New England and the Middle States together, and the Middle West has indefinite capacity for growth. The educational forces are more democratic than in the East, and the Middle West has twice as many students (if we count together the common school, secondary, and collegiate attendance), as have New England and the Middle States combined. Nor is this educational system, as a whole, inferior to that of the Eastern States. State universities crown the public school system in every one of these States of the Middle West, and rank with the universities of the seaboard, while private munificence has furnished others on an unexampled scale. The public and private art collections of Pittsburgh, Chicago, St. Paul, and other cities vie with those of the seaboard. . . . There is throughout the Middle West a vigor and a mental activity among the common people that bode well for its future. If the task of reducing the Province of the Lake and Prairie Plains to the uses of civilization should for a time overweigh art and literature, and even high political and social ideals, it would not be surprising. But if the ideals

of the pioneers shall survive the inundation of material success, we may expect to see in the Middle West the rise of a highly intelligent society where culture shall be reconciled with democracy in the large.

*The Frontier in American History, 1920*



# The Far West



Rockwell Kent illustration for *Moby Dick*, courtesy of R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company



# Scenes of the Far West

## 1. The Silence of the Plains

OLE E. RÖLVAAG

The infinitude surrounding her on every hand might not have been so oppressive, might even have brought her a measure of peace, if it had not been for the deep silence, which lay heavier here than in a church. Indeed, what was there to break it? She had passed beyond the outposts of civilization; the nearest dwelling places of men were far away. Here no warbling of birds rose on the air, no buzzing of insects sounded; even the wind had died away; the waving blades of grass that trembled to the faintest breath now stood erect and quiet, as if listening, in the great hush of the evening. . . . All along the way, coming out, she had noticed this strange thing: the stillness had grown deeper, the silence more depressing, the farther west they journeyed; it must have been over two weeks now since she had heard a bird sing! Had they travelled into some nameless, abandoned region? Could no living thing exist out here, in the empty, desolate, endless wastes of green and blue? . . . How *could* existence go on, she thought, desperately? If life is to thrive and endure, it must at least have something to hide behind! . . .

*Giants In The Earth, 1927*

## 2. Homesteaders in Caravan

OLE E. RÖLVAAG

That summer many land seekers passed through the settlement on their way west. The arrival of a caravan was always an event of the greatest importance. How exciting they were, those little ships of the Great Plain! The prairie schooners, rigged with canvas tops which gleamed whitely in the shimmering light, first became visible as tiny specks against the eastern sky; one might almost imagine them to be sea gulls perched far, far away on an endless

green meadow; but as one continued to watch, the white dots grew; they came drifting across the prairie like the day; after long waiting, they gradually floated out of the haze, distinct and clear; then, as they drew near, they proved to be veritable wagons, with horses hitched ahead, with folk and all their possessions inside, and a whole herd of cattle following behind.

The caravan would crawl slowly into the settlement and come to anchor in front of one of the sod houses; the moment it halted, people would swarm down and stretch themselves and begin to look after the teams; cattle would bellow; sheep would bleat as they ran about. Many queer races and costumes were to be seen in these caravans, and a babble of strange tongues shattered the air. Nut-brown youngsters, dressed only in a shirt and a pair of pants, would fly around between the huts, looking for other youngsters; an infant, its mother crooning softly to it, would sit securely perched in the fold of her arm; white-haired old men and women, who should have been living quietly at home, preparing for a different journey, were also to be seen in the group, running about like youngsters; the daily jogging from sky line to sky line had brightened their eyes and quickened their tongues. All were busy; each had a thousand questions to ask; then every last one of them was in high spirits, though they knew no other home than the wagon and the blue skies above . . . The Lord only could tell whence all these people had come and whither they were going! . . .

*Giants In The Earth, 1927*

### 3. The Great American Desert

MARK TWAIN

On the nineteenth day we crossed the Great American Desert—forty memorable miles of bottomless sand, into which the coach wheels sunk from six inches to a foot. We worked our passage most of the way across. That is to say, we got out and walked. It was a dreary pull and a long and thirsty one, for we had no water. From one extremity of this desert to the other, the road was white with the bones of oxen and horses. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that we could have walked the forty miles and set our feet on a bone at every step! The desert was one prodigious grave-yard. And the log-chains, wagon tires and rotting wrecks

of vehicles were almost as thick as the bones. I think we saw log-chains enough rusting there in the desert to reach across any state in the Union. Do not these relics suggest something of an idea of the fearful suffering and privation the early emigrants to California endured?

*Roughing It, 1871*

## 4. Fort Laramie

FRANCIS PARKMAN

We were met at the gate, but by no means cordially welcomed. Indeed, we seemed objects of some distrust and suspicion, until Henry Chatillon explained that we were not traders, and we, in confirmation, handed to the *bourgeois* a letter of introduction from his principals. He took it, turned it upside down, and tried hard to read it; but his literary attainments not being adequate to the task, he applied for relief to the clerk, a sleek, smiling Frenchman, named Monthalon. The letter read, Bordeaux (the *bourgeois*) seemed gradually to awaken to a sense of what was expected of him. Though not deficient in hospitable intentions, he was wholly unaccustomed to act as master of ceremonies. Discarding all formalities of reception, he did not honor us with a single word, but walked swiftly across the area, while we followed in some admiration to a railing and a flight of steps opposite the entrance. He signed to us that we had better fasten our horses to the railing; then he walked up the steps, tramped along a rude balcony, and, kicking open a door, displayed a large room, rather more elaborately furnished than a barn. For furniture it had a rough bedstead, but no bed; two chairs, a chest of drawers, a tin pail to hold water, and a board to cut tobacco upon. A brass crucifix hung on the wall, and close at hand a recent scalp, with hair full a yard long, was suspended from a nail. I shall again have occasion to mention this dismal trophy, its history being connected with that of our subsequent proceedings.

This apartment, the best in Fort Laramie, was that usually occupied by the legitimate *bourgeois*, Papin, in whose absence the command devolved upon Bordeaux. The latter, a stout, bluff little fellow, much inflated by a sense of his new authority, began to roar for buffalo-robcs. These being brought and spread upon the

floor, formed our beds; much better ones than we had of late been accustomed to. Our arrangements made, we stepped out to the balcony to take a more leisurely survey of the long-looked-for haven at which we had arrived at last. Beneath us was the square area surrounded by little rooms, or rather cells, which opened upon it. These were devoted to various purposes, but served chiefly for the accommodation of the men employed at the fort, or of the equally numerous squaws whom they were allowed to maintain in it. Opposite to us rose the blockhouse above the gateway; it was adorned with the figure of a horse at full speed, daubed upon the boards with red paint, and exhibiting a degree of skill which might rival that displayed by the Indians in executing similar designs upon their robes and lodges. A busy scene was enacting in the area. The wagons of Vaskiss, an old trader, were about to set out for a remote post in the mountains, and the Canadians were going through their preparations with all possible bustle, while here and there an Indian stood looking on with imperturbable gravity.

Fort Laramie is one of the posts established by the "American Fur Company," which wellnigh monopolizes the Indian trade of this region. Here its officials rule with an absolute sway; the arm of the United States has little force; for when we were there, the extreme outposts of her troops were about seven hundred miles to the eastward. The little fort is built of bricks dried in the sun, and externally is of an oblong form, with bastions of clay, in the form of ordinary blockhouses, at two of the corners. The walls are about fifteen feet high, and surmounted by a slender palisade. The roofs of the apartments within, which are built close against the walls, serve the purpose of a banquette. Within, the fort is divided by a partition: on one side is the square area, surrounded by the store-rooms, offices, and apartments of the inmates; on the other is the *corral*, a narrow place, encompassed by the high clay walls, where at night, or in presence of dangerous Indians, the horses and mules of the fort are crowded for safe keeping. The main entrance has two gates, with an arched passage intervening. A little square window, high above the ground, opens laterally from an adjoining chamber into this passage; so that when the inner gate is closed and barred, a person without may still hold communication with those within, through this narrow aperture. This obviates the necessity of admitting suspicious Indians, for purposes of trading, into the body of the fort; for when danger is apprehended, the inner gate is shut fast, and all traffic is carried

on by means of the window. This precaution, though necessary at some of the company's posts, is seldom resorted to at Fort Laramie; where, though men are frequently killed in the neighborhood, no apprehensions are felt of any general designs of hostility from the Indians. . . .

As we were looking, at sunset, from the wall, upon the desolate plains that surround the fort, we observed a cluster of strange objects, like scaffolds, rising in the distance against the red western sky. They bore aloft some singular-looking burdens; and at their foot glimmered something white, like bones. This was the place of sepulture of some Dahcotah chiefs, whose remains their people are fond of placing in the vicinity of the fort, in the hope that they may thus be protected from violation at the hands of their enemies. Yet it has happened more than once, and quite recently, that war-parties of the Crow Indians, ranging through the country, have thrown the bodies from the scaffolds, and broken them to pieces, amid the yells of the Dahcotah, who remained pent up in the fort, too few to defend the honored relics from insult. The white objects upon the ground were buffalo skulls, arranged in the mystic circle commonly seen at Indian places of sepulture upon the prairie.

*The California and Oregon Trail, 1849*

## 5. The Crest of the Divide

WASHINGTON IRVING

In the green pastures bordering upon these lakes, the travellers halted to repose, and to give their weary horses time to crop the sweet and tender herbage. They had now ascended to a great height above the level of the plains, yet they beheld huge crags of granite piled one upon another, and beetling like battlements far above them. While two of the men remained in the camp with the horses, Captain Bonneville, accompanied by the other men, set out to climb a neighbouring height, hoping to gain a commanding prospect, and discern some practicable route through this stupendous labyrinth. After much toil, he reached the summit of a lofty cliff, but it was only to behold gigantic peaks rising all around, and towering far into the snowy regions of the atmosphere. Selecting one which appeared to be the highest, he crossed a nar-

row intervening valley, and began to scale it. He soon found that he had undertaken a tremendous task; but the pride of man is never more obstinate than when climbing mountains. The ascent was so steep and rugged that he and his companions were frequently obliged to clamber on hands and knees, with their guns slung upon their backs. Frequently, exhausted with fatigue, and dripping with perspiration, they threw themselves upon the snow, and took handfuls of it to allay their parching thirst. At one place they even stripped off their coats and hung them upon the bushes, and thus lightly clad, proceeded to scramble over these eternal snows! As they ascended still higher, there were cool breezes that refreshed and braced them, and springing with new ardor to their task, they at length attained the summit.

Here a scene burst upon the view of Captain Bonneville, that for a time astonished and overwhelmed him with its immensity. He stood, in fact, upon that dividing ridge which Indians regard as the crest of the world; and on each side of which the landscape may be said to decline to the two cardinal oceans of the globe. Whichever way he turned his eye, it was confounded by the vastness and variety of objects. Beneath him, the Rocky Mountains seemed to open all their secret recesses; deep, solemn valleys; treasured lakes; dreary passes; rugged defiles and foaming torrents; while beyond their savage precincts, the eye was lost in an almost immeasurable landscape, stretching on every side into dim and hazy distance, like the expanse of a summer's sea. Whichever way he looked, he beheld vast plains glimmering with reflected sunshine; mighty streams wandering on their shining course toward either ocean, and snowy mountains, chain beyond chain, and peak beyond peak, till they melted like clouds into the horizon. For a time, the Indian fable seemed realized; he had attained that height from which the Blackfoot warrior, after death, first catches a view of the land of souls, and beholds the happy hunting grounds spread out below him, brightening with the abodes of the free and generous spirits. The captain stood for a long while gazing upon this scene, lost in a crowd of vague and indefinite ideas and sensations. A long-drawn inspiration at length relieved him from this inthralment of the mind, and he began to analyze the parts of this vast panorama. A simple enumeration of a few of its features may give some idea of its collective grandeur and magnificence.

The peak on which the captain had taken his stand commanded the whole Wind River chain; which, in fact, may rather be considered one immense mountain, broken into snowy peaks and

lateral spurs, and seamed with narrow valleys. Some of these valleys glittered with silver lakes and gushing streams; the fountain-heads, as it were, of the mighty tributaries to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Beyond the snowy peaks, to the south, and far, far below the mountain range, the gentle river, called the Sweet Water, was seen pursuing its tranquil way through the rugged regions of the Black Hills. In the east, the head-waters of Wind River wandered through a plain, until, mingling in one powerful current, they forced their way through the range of Horn Mountains, and were lost to view. To the north were caught glimpses of the upper streams of the Yellowstone, that great tributary of the Missouri. In another direction were to be seen some of the sources of the Oregon, or Columbia, flowing to the northwest, past those towering landmarks, the Three Tetons, and pouring down into the great lava plain; while, almost at the captain's feet, the Green River, or Colorado of the West, set forth on its wandering pilgrimage to the Gulf of California; at first a mere mountain torrent, dashing northward over crag and precipice, in a succession of cascades, and tumbling into the plain, where, expanding into an ample river, it circled away to the south, and after alternately shining out and disappearing in the mazes of the vast landscape, was finally lost in a horizon of mountains. The day was calm and cloudless, and the atmosphere so pure that objects were discernible at an astonishing distance. The whole of this immense area was enclosed by an outer range of shadowy peaks, some of them faintly marked on the horizon, which seemed to wall it in from the rest of the earth.

*The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, 1837*

## 6. Snow in the High Sierras

BRET HARTE

Snow. Everywhere. As far as the eye could reach—fifty miles, looking southward from the highest white peak. Filling ravines and gulches and dropping from the walls of cañons in white shroud-like drifts, fashioning the dividing ridge into the likeness of a monstrous grave, hiding the bases of giant pines and completely covering young trees and larches, rimming with porcelain the bowl-like edges of still, cold lakes, and undulating in motionless white billows to the edge of the distant horizon. Snow lying every-

where over the California Sierras on the 15th day of March, 1848, and still falling.

It had been snowing for ten days; snowing in finely-granulated powder, in damp, spongy flakes, in thin, feathery plumes; snowing from a leaden sky steadily, snowing fiercely, shaken out of purple-black clouds in white flocculent masses, or dropping in long level lines like white lances from the tumbled and broken heavens. But always silently! The woods were so choked with it, the branches were so laden with it, it had so permeated, filled and possessed earth and sky; it had so cushioned and muffled the ringing rocks and echoing hills that all sound was deadened. The strongest gust, the fiercest blast awoke no sigh or complaint from the snow-packed rigid files of forest. There was no cracking of bough nor crackle of underbrush; the overladen branches of pine and fir yielded and gave way without a sound. The silence was vast, measureless, complete!

Nor could it be said that any outward sign of life or motion changed the fixed outlines of this stricken landscape. Above, there was no play of light and shadow, only the occasional deepening of storm of night. Below, no bird winged its flight across the white expanse, no beast haunted the confines of the black woods; whatever of brute nature might have once inhabited these solitudes had long since flown to the low lands. There was no track or imprint; whatever foot might have left its mark upon this waste, each succeeding snow-fall obliterated all trace or record. Every morning the solitude was virgin and unbroken; a million tiny feet had stepped into the track and filled it up.

*Gabriel Conroy, 1876*

## 7. Acoma, the City of the Sky

CHARLES F. LUMMIS

If there is any sight in the world which will cling to one, unimpaired by later impressions, it is the first view of Acoma and its alley from the *mesa*, as one comes in from the west. After the long, slow slope among the sprawling cedars, one stands suddenly upon a smooth divide, looking out upon such a scene as is nowhere else. A few rods ahead, the *mesa* breaks down in a swift cliff of six hundred feet to a valley that seems surely enchanted. A grassy

trough, that ineffable hazy smoothness which is only of the Southwest, crowded upon by noble precipices, patched with exquisite hues of rocks and clays and growing crops—it is such a vista as would be impossible outside the arid lands. And in its midst lies a shadowy world of crags so unearthly beautiful, so weird, so unique, that it is hard for the onlooker to believe himself in America, or upon this dull planet at all. As the evening shadows play hide-and-seek among those towering sandstones it is as if an army of Titans marched across the enchanted plain. To the left beetles the vast cliff of Kat-zí-mo, or the Mesa Encantada, the noblest single rock in America; to the right, the tall portals of two fine cañons, themselves treasure-houses of wonders; between, the chaos of the buttes that flank the superb *mesa* of Acoma. That is one rock—a dizzy air-island above the plain—three hundred and fifty-seven feet high, seventy acres in area upon its irregular but practically level top—a stone table upheld by ineffable precipices which are not merely perpendicular but in great part actually overhanging. The contour of those cliffs is an endless enchantment. They are broken by scores of marvellous bays, scores of terrific columns and pinnacles, crags and towers. There are dozens of “natural bridges,” from one of a fathom’s span to one so sublime, so crushing in its savage and enormous grandeur, that the heart fairly stops beating at first sight of it. There are strange standing rocks and balanced rocks, vast *potreros* and fairy minarets, wonderlands of recesses, and mysterious caves. It is the noblest specimen of fantastic erosion on the continent. Everywhere there is insistent suggestion of Assyrian sculpture in its rocks. One might fancy it a giant Babylon, water-worn to dimness. The peculiar cleavage of its beautiful sandstone has hemmed it with strange top-heavy statues that guard grim chasms. The invariable approach of visitors is to the tamest side of the *mesa*; and *that* surpasses what one shall find elsewhere. But to outdo one’s wildest dreams of the picturesque, one should explore the whole circumference of the mesa, which not a half a dozen Americans have ever done. No one has ever exhausted Acoma; those who know it best are forever stumbling upon new glories.

Upon the bare table-top of this strange stone island of the desert, seven thousand feet above the level of the sea, stands a town of matchless interest—the home of half a thousand quaint lives, and of half a thousand years’ romance. How old is that mysterious sky city no man may know. In the far gray past Acoma stood atop the Mesa Encantada, three miles north; but a mighty throe of nature toppled down the vast ladder-rock which gave sole adit to

that dizzy perch—twice as high as the now Acoma. The people were left homeless in the plain, where they were tending their crops; and three doomed women, left home, were shut aloft to perish upon the accursed cliff. But when the Spanish world-finders saw this magic valley the present Acoma was already an ancient city, from whose eternal battlements the painted natives looked down upon the mailed invaders by as many hundreds of feet as centuries have since then faded. There stand, so far aloft, the quaint homes of six hundred people—three giant blocks of stone and adobe, running east and west near a thousand feet, and skyward forty—and their huge church. When one has climbed the *mesa* to the town and grasped its proportions, wonder grows to amaze. No other town in the world is reached only by such vertiginous trails, or rather by such ladders of the rock; and yet up these awful paths the patient Quéres have brought upon their backs every timber, every stone, every bit of adobe mud to build that strange city, and its marvellous church. There are timbers fourteen inches square and forty feet long, brought by human muscle alone from the mountains twenty miles away. The church walls are sixty feet high and ten feet through; and the building covers more ground than any modern cathedral in the United States. The graveyard in front, nearly two hundred feet square, took forty years in the building; for first the gentle toilers had to frame a giant box with stone walls, a box forty feet deep at the outer edge, and then to fill it backful by backful with earth from the far plain. In the weird stone “ladders” by which the top of the cliff is reached, the patient moccasined feet of forgotten centuries have sunk their imprint six inches deep in the rock. Antiquity and mystery haunt every nook. The very air is hazy with romance. How have they lived and loved and suffered here in their skyward home, these quiet Hano Oshatch—the Children of the Sun.

*The Land of Poco Tiempo, 1893*

## 8. The Harbor of Santa Barbara

RICHARD HENRY DANA

The large bay lay about us, nearly smooth, as there was hardly a breath of wind stirring, though the boat's crew who went ashore told us that the long ground-swell broke into heavy surf on the

beach. There was only one vessel in the port—a long, sharp brig of about three hundred tons, with raking masts, and very square yards, and English colours at her peak. We afterwards learned that she was built at Guayaquil, and named the Ayacucho, after the place where the battle was fought that gave Peru her independence, and was now owned by a Scotchman named Wilson, who commanded her, and was engaged in the trade between Callao and other parts of South America and California. She was a fast sailer, as we frequently afterwards saw, and had a crew of Sandwich Islanders on board. Beside this vessel, there was no object to break the surface of the bay. Two points ran out as the horns of the crescent, one of which—the one to the westward—was low and sandy, and is that to which vessels are obliged to give a wide berth when running out for a southeaster; the other is high, bold, and well wooded, and has a mission upon it, called Santa Buenaventura, from which the point is named. In the middle of this crescent, directly opposite the anchoring ground, lie the Mission and town of Santa Barbara, on a low plain, but little above the level of the sea, covered with grass, though entirely without trees, and surrounded on three sides by an amphitheatre of mountains, which slant off to the distance of fifteen or twenty miles. The Mission stands a little back of the town, and is a large building, or rather collection of buildings, in the centre of which is a high tower, with a belfry of five bells. The whole, being plastered, makes quite a show at a distance, and is the mark by which vessels come to anchor. The town lies a little nearer to the beach,—about half a mile from it,—and is composed of one-story houses built of sun-baked clay, or adobe, some of them whitewashed, with red tiles on the roofs. I should judge that there were about a hundred of them; and in the midst of them stands the Presidio, or fort, built of the same materials, and apparently but little stronger. The town is finely situated, with a bay in front, and an amphitheatre of hills behind. The only thing which diminishes its beauty is, that the hills have no large trees upon them, they having been all burnt by a great fire which swept them off about a dozen years ago, and they had not yet grown again. The fire was described to me by an inhabitant, as having been a very terrible and magnificent sight. The air of the whole valley was so heated that the people were obliged to leave the town and take up their quarters for several days upon the beach.

## 9. By the Sun-Down Seas

JOAQUIN MILLER

Like fragments of an uncompleted world,  
From bleak Alaska, bound in ice and spray,  
To where the peaks of Darien lie curl'd  
In clouds, the broken lands loom bold and gray.  
The seamen nearing San Francisco Bay  
Forget the compass here; with sturdy hand  
They seize the wheel, look up, then bravely lay  
The ship to shore by rugged peaks that stand  
The stern and proud patrician fathers of the land.

They stand white stairs of heaven,—stand a line  
Of lifting, endless, and eternal white.  
They look upon the far and flashing brine,  
Upon the boundless plains, the broken height  
Of Kamiakin's battlements. The flight  
Of time is underneath their untopp'd towers.  
They seem to push aside the moon at night,  
To jostle and to loose the stars. The flowers  
Of heaven fall about their brows in shining showers.

They stand a line of lifted snowy isles  
High held above a toss'd and tumbled sea,—  
A sea of wood in wild unmeasured miles:  
White pyramids of Faith where man is free;  
White monuments of hope that yet shall be  
The mounts of matchless and immortal song. . . .

They look as cold as kings upon a throne:  
The mantling winds of night are crush'd and curl'd  
As feathers curl. The elements are hurl'd  
From off their bosoms, and are bidden go,  
Like evil spirits, to an under-world.  
They stretch from Cariboo to Mexico.  
A line of battle-tents in everlasting snow.

*Songs of Sun-Lands, 1873*

## 10. Polk Street

FRANK NORRIS

On week days the street was very lively. It woke to its work about seven o'clock, at the time when the newsboys made their appearance together with the day laborers. The laborers went trudging past in a straggling file—plumbers' apprentices, their pockets stuffed with sections of lead pipe, tweezers, and pliers; carpenters, carrying nothing but their little pasteboard lunch baskets painted to imitate leather; gangs of street workers, their overalls soiled with yellow clay, their picks and long-handled shovels over their shoulders; plasterers, spotted with lime from head to foot. This little army of workers, tramping steadily in one direction, met and mingled with other toilers of a different description—conductors and "swing men" of the cable company going on duty; heavy-eyed night clerks from the drug stores on their way home to sleep; roundsmen returning to the precinct police station to make their night report, and Chinese market gardeners teetering past under their heavy baskets. The cable cars began to fill up; all along the street could be seen the shopkeepers taking down their shutters.

Between seven and eight the street breakfasted. Now and then a waiter from one of the cheap restaurants crossed from one sidewalk to the other, balancing on one palm a tray covered with a napkin. Everywhere was the smell of coffee and of frying steaks. A little later, following in the path of the day laborers, came the clerks and shop girls, dressed with a certain cheap smartness, always in a hurry, glancing apprehensively at the power-house clock. Their employers followed an hour or so later—on the cable cars for the most part—whiskered gentlemen with huge stomachs, reading the morning papers with great gravity; bank cashiers and insurance clerks with flowers in their buttonholes.

At the same time the school children invaded the street, filling the air with a clamor of shrill voices, stopping at the stationers' shops, or idling a moment in the doorways of the candy stores. For over half an hour they held possession of the sidewalks, then suddenly disappeared, leaving behind one or two stragglers who hurried along with great strides of their little thin legs, very anxious and preoccupied.

Towards eleven o'clock the ladies from the great avenue a block above Polk Street made their appearance, promenading the sidewalks leisurely, deliberately. They were at their morning's market-

ing. They were handsome women, beautifully dressed. They knew by name their butchers and grocers and vegetable men. From his window McTeague saw them in front of the stalls, gloved and veiled and daintily shod, the subservient provision-men at their elbows, scribbling hastily in the order books. They all seemed to know one another, these grand ladies from the fashionable avenue. Meetings took place here and there; a conversation was begun; others arrived; groups were formed; little impromptu receptions were held before the chopping blocks of butchers' stalls, or on the sidewalk, around boxes of berries and fruit.

From noon to evening the population of the street was of a mixed character. The street was busiest at that time; a vast and prolonged murmur arose—the mingled shuffling of feet, the rattle of wheels, the heavy trundling of cable cars. At four o'clock the school children once more swarmed the sidewalks, again disappearing with surprising suddenness. At six the great homeward march commenced; the cars were crowded, the laborers thronged the sidewalks, the newsboys chanted the evening papers. Then all at once the street fell quiet; hardly a soul was in sight; the sidewalks were deserted. It was supper hour. Evening began; and one by one a multitude of lights, from the demoniac glare of the druggists' windows to the dazzling blue whiteness of the electric globes, grew thick from street corner to street corner. Once more the street was crowded. Now there was no thought but for amusement. The cable cars were loaded with theatre-goers—men in high hats and young girls in furred opera cloaks. On the sidewalks were groups and couples—the plumbers' apprentices, the girls of the ribbon counters, the little families that lived on the second stories over their shops, the dressmakers, the small doctors, the harness makers—all the various inhabitants of the street were abroad, strolling idly from shop window to shop window, taking the air after the day's work. Groups of girls collected on the corners, talking and laughing very loud, making remarks upon the young men that passed them. The *tamale* men appeared. A band of Salvationists began to sing before a saloon.

Then, little by little, Polk Street dropped back to solitude. Eleven o'clock struck from the power-house clock. Lights were extinguished. At one o'clock the cable stopped, leaving an abrupt silence in the air. All at once it seemed very still. The only noises were the occasional footfalls of a policeman and the persistent calling of ducks and geese in the closed market. The street was asleep.

*McTeague*, 1899

## 11. Point Joe

ROBINSON JEFFERS

Point Joe has teeth and has torn ships; it has fierce and solitary  
beauty;  
Walk there all day you shall see nothing that will not make part  
of a poem.

I saw the spars and planks of shipwreck on the rocks, and beyond  
the desolate  
Sea-meadows rose the warped wind-bitten van of the pines, a fog-  
bank vaulted

Forest and all, the flat sea-meadows at that time of year were  
plated  
Golden with the low flower called footsteps of the spring, millions  
of flowerets,

Whose light suffused upward into the fog flooded its vault, we  
wandered  
Through a weird country where the light beat up from earthward,  
and was golden.

One other moved there, an old Chinaman gathering seaweed from  
the sea-rocks,  
He brought it in his basket and spread it flat to dry on the edge of  
the meadow.

Permanent things are what is needful in a poem, things tem-  
porally  
Of great dimension, things continually renewed or always  
present.

Grass that is made each year equals the mountains in her past and  
future;  
Fashionable and momentary things we need not see nor speak  
of.

Man gleaning food between the solemn presences of land and  
ocean,  
On shores where better men have shipwrecked, under fog and  
among flowers,

Equals the mountains in his past and future; that glow from the  
earth was only  
A trick of nature's, one must forgive nature a thousand graceful  
subtleties.

*Roan Stallion, 1925*

# *Men and Deeds in the Far West*

## 1. Rendezvous of Mountain Men

WASHINGTON IRVING

The Green River valley was at this time the scene of one of those general gatherings of traders, trappers, and Indians, that we have already mentioned. The three rival companies, which, for a year past had been endeavoring to out-trade, out-trap, and outwit each other, were here encamped in close proximity, awaiting their annual supplies. About four miles from the rendezvous of Captain Bonneville was that of the American Fur Company, hard by which, was that also of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.

After the eager rivalry and almost hostility displayed by these companies in their late campaigns, it might be expected that, when thus brought in juxtaposition, they would hold themselves warily and sternly aloof from each other, and, should they happen to come in contact, brawl and bloodshed would ensue.

No such thing! Never did rival lawyers after a wrangle at the bar meet with more social good-humor at a circuit dinner. The hunting season over, all past tricks and manoeuvres are forgotten, all feuds and bickerings buried in oblivion. From the middle of June to the middle of September, all trapping is suspended; for the beavers are then shedding their furs and their skins are of little value. This, then, is the trapper's holiday, when he is all for fun and frolic, and ready for a saturnalia among the mountains.

At the present season, too, all parties were in good humor. The year had been productive. Competition, by threatening to lessen their profits, had quickened their wits, roused their energies, and made them turn every favorable chance to the best advantage; so that, on assembling at their respective places of rendezvous, each company found itself in possession of a rich stock of peltries.

The leaders of the different companies, therefore, mingled on terms of perfect good-fellowship; interchanging visits, and regaling each other in the best style their respective camps afforded. But the rich treat for the worthy captain was to see the "chivalry" of the various encampments engaged in contests of skill at running, jumping, wrestling, shooting with the rifle, and running horses.

And then their rough hunters' feastings and carousals. They drank together, they sang, they laughed, they whooped; they tried to out-brag and out-lie each other in stories of their adventures and achievements. Here the free trappers were in all their glory; they considered themselves the "cocks of the walk," and always carried the highest crests. Now and then familiarity was pushed too far, and would effervesce into a brawl, and a "rough and tumble" fight; but it all ended in cordial reconciliation and maudlin endearment.

The presence of the Shoshonie tribe contributed occasionally to cause temporary jealousies and feuds. The Shoshonie beauties became objects of rivalry among some of the amorous mountaineers. Happy was the trapper who could muster up a red blanket, a string of gay beads, or a paper of precious vermilion, with which to win the smiles of a Shoshonie fair one.

The caravans of supplies arrived at the valley just at this period of gallantry and good-fellowship. Now commenced a scene of eager competition and wild prodigality at the different encampments. Bales were hastily ripped open, and their motley contents poured forth. A mania for purchasing spread itself throughout the several bands—munitions for war, for hunting, for gallantry, were seized upon with equal avidity—rifles, hunting knives, traps, scarlet cloth, red blankets, garish beads, and glittering trinkets, were bought at any price, and scores run up without any thought how they were ever to be rubbed off. The free trappers especially were extravagant in their purchases. For a free mountaineer to pause at a paltry consideration of dollars and cents, in the attainment of any object that might strike his fancy, would stamp him with the mark of the beast in the estimation of his comrades. For a trader to refuse one of these free and flourishing blades a credit, whatever unpaid scores might stare him in the face, would be a flagrant affront, scarcely to be forgiven.

Now succeeded another outbreak of revelry and extravagance. The trappers were newly fitted out and arrayed, and dashed about with their horses caparisoned in Indian style. The Shoshonie beauties also flaunted about in all the colors of the rainbow. Every freak of prodigality was indulged to its fullest extent, and in a little while most of the trappers, having squandered away all their wages, and perhaps run knee-deep in debt, were ready for another hard campaign in the wilderness.

*The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, 1837*

## 2. Buffalo Hunting

FRANCIS PARKMAN

The country before us was now thronged with buffalo, and a sketch of the manner of hunting them will not be out of place. There are two methods commonly practised, "running" and "approaching." The chase on horseback, which goes by the name of "running," is the more violent and dashing mode of the two, that is to say, when the buffalo are in one of their wild moods; for otherwise it is tame enough. A practised and skilful hunter, well mounted, will sometimes kill five or six cows in a single chase, loading his gun again and again as his horse rushes through the tumult. In attacking a small band of buffalo, or in separating a single animal from the herd and assailing it apart from the rest, there is less excitement and less danger. In fact, the animals are at times so stupid and lethargic that there is little sport in killing them. With a bold and a well-trained horse the hunter may ride so close to the buffalo that as they gallop side by side he may touch him with his hand; nor is there much danger in this as long as the buffalo's strength and breath continue unabated; but when he becomes tired and can no longer run with ease, when his tongue lolls out and the foam flies from his jaws, then the hunter had better keep a more respectful distance; the distressed brute may turn upon him at any instant; and especially the moment when he fires his gun. The horse then leaps aside, and the hunter has need of a tenacious seat in the saddle, for if he is thrown to the ground there is no hope for him. When he sees his attack defeated, the buffalo resumes his flight, but if the shot is well directed he soon stops; for a few moments he stands still, then totters and falls heavily upon the prairie.

The chief difficulty in running buffalo, as it seems to me, is that of loading the gun or pistol at full gallop. Many hunters for convenience' sake carry three or four bullets in the mouth; the powder is poured down the muzzle of the piece, the bullet dropped in after it, the stock struck hard upon the pommel of the saddle, and the work is done. The danger of this is obvious. Should the blow on the pommel fail to send the bullet home, or should the bullet, in the act of aiming, start from its place and roll towards the muzzle, the gun would probably burst in discharging. Many a shattered hand and worse casualties besides have been the result of such an accident. To obviate it, some hunters make use of a

ramrod, usually hung by a string from the neck, but this materially increases the difficulty of loading. The bows and arrows which the Indians use in running buffalo have many advantages over firearms, and even white men occasionally employ them.

The danger of the chase arises not so much from the onset of the wounded animal as from the nature of the ground which the hunter must ride over. The prairie does not always present a smooth, level, and uniform surface; very often it is broken with hills and hollows, intersected by ravines, and in the remoter parts studded by the stiff wild-sage bushes. The most formidable obstructions, however, are the burrows of wild animals, wolves, badgers, and particularly prairie-dogs, with whose holes the ground for a very great extent is frequently honeycombed. In the blindness of the chase the hunter rushes over it unconscious of danger; his horse, at full career, thrusts his leg deep into one of the burrows; the bone snaps, the rider is hurled forward to the ground and probably killed. Yet accidents in buffalo running happen less frequently than one would suppose; in the recklessness of the chase, the hunter enjoys all the impunity of a drunken man, and may ride in safety over gullies and declivities, where, should he attempt to pass in his sober senses, he would infallibly break his neck.

The method of "approaching," being practised on foot, has many advantages over that of "running;" in the former, one neither breaks down his horse nor endangers his own life; he must be cool, collected, and watchful; must understand the buffalo, observe the features of the country and the course of the wind, and be well skilled in using the rifle. The buffalo are strange animals; sometimes they are so stupid and infatuated that a man may walk up to them in full sight on the open prairie, and even shoot several of their number before the rest will think it necessary to retreat. At another moment they will be so shy and wary that in order to approach them the utmost skill, experience, and judgment are necessary. Kit Carson, I believe, stands pre-eminent in running buffalo; in approaching, no man living can bear away the palm from Henry Chatillon.

*The California and Oregon Trail, 1849*

### 3. The Pony Express

MARK TWAIN

In a little while all interest was taken up in stretching our necks and watching for the "pony-rider"—the fleet messenger who sped across the continent from St. Joe to Sacramento, carrying letters nineteen hundred miles in eight days! Think of that for perishable horse and human flesh and blood to do! The pony-rider was usually a little bit of a man, brimful of spirit and endurance. No matter what time of the day or night his watch came on, and no matter whether it was winter or summer, raining, snowing, hailing, or sleeting, or whether his "beat" was a level straight road or a crazy trail over mountain crags and precipices, or whether it led through peaceful regions or regions that swarmed with hostile Indians, he must be always ready to leap into the saddle and be off like the wind! There was no idling-time for a pony-rider on duty. He rode fifty miles without stopping, by daylight, moonlight, starlight, or through the blackness of darkness—just as it happened. He rode a splendid horse that was born for a racer and fed and lodged like a gentleman; kept him at his utmost speed for ten miles, and then, as he came crashing up to the station where stood two men holding fast a fresh, impatient steed, the transfer of rider and mail-bag was made in the twinkling of an eye, and away flew the eager pair and were out of sight before the spectator could get hardly the ghost of a look. Both rider and horse went "flying light." The rider's dress was thin, and fitted close; he wore a "roundabout," and a skull-cap, and tucked his pantaloons into his boot-tops like a race-rider. He carried no arms—he carried nothing that was not absolutely necessary, for even the postage on his literary freight was worth *five dollars a letter*. He got but little frivolous correspondence to carry—his bag had business letters in it mostly. His horse was stripped of all unnecessary weight, too. He wore light shoes, or none at all. The little flat mail-pockets strapped under the rider's thighs would each hold about the bulk of a child's primer. They held many and many an important business chapter and newspaper letter, but these were written on paper as airy and thin as goldleaf, nearly, and thus bulk and weight were economized. The stage-coach traveled about a hundred to a hundred and twenty-five miles a day (twenty-four hours), the pony-rider about two hundred and fifty. There were about eighty pony-riders in the saddle all the time, night and day, stretching in

a long, scattering procession from Missouri to California, forty flying eastward, and forty toward the west, and among them making four hundred gallant horses earn a stirring livelihood and see a deal of scenery every single day in the year.

We had had a consuming desire, from the beginning, to see a pony-rider, but somehow or other all that passed us and all that met us managed to streak by in the night, and so we heard only a whiz and a hail, and the swift phantom of the desert was gone before we could get our heads out of the windows. But now we were expecting one along every moment, and would see him in broad daylight. Presently the driver exclaims:

“HERE HE COMES!”

Every neck is stretched further, and every eye strained wider. Away across the endless dead level of the prairie a black speck appears against the sky, and it is plain that it moves. Well, I should think so! In a second or two it becomes a horse and rider, rising and falling, rising and falling—sweeping toward us nearer and nearer—growing more and more distinct, more and more sharply defined—nearer and still nearer, and the flutter of the hoofs comes faintly to the ear—another instant a whoop and a hurrah from our upper deck, a wave of the rider’s hand, but no reply, and man and horse burst past our excited faces, and go swinging away like a belated fragment of a storm!

So sudden is it all, and so like a flash of unreal fancy, that but for the flake of white foam left quivering and perishing on a mail-sack after the vision had flashed by and disappeared, we might have doubted whether we had seen any actual horse and man at all, maybe.

*Roughing It, 1872*

## 4. Little Breeches

JOHN HAY

I don’t go much on religion,  
I never ain’t had no show;  
But I’ve got a middlin’ tight grip, sir,  
On the handful o’ things I know.  
I don’t pan out on the prophets  
And free-will and that sort of thing,—  
But I b’lieve in God and the angels,  
Ever sence one night last spring.

I come into town with some turnips,  
And my little Gabe come along,—  
No four-year-old in the county  
Could beat him for pretty and strong,—  
Peart and chipper and sassy,  
Always ready to swear and fight,—  
And I'd larnt him to chaw terbacker  
Jest to keep his milk-teeth white.

The snow come down like a blanket  
As I passed by Taggart's store;  
I went in for a jug of molasses  
And left the team at the door.  
They scared at something and started,—  
I heard one little squall,  
And hell-to-split over the prairie  
Went team, Little Breeches, and all.

Hell-to-split over the prairie!  
I was almost froze with skeer;  
But we roused up some torches,  
And sarched for 'em far and near.  
As last we struck hosses and wagon,  
Snowed under a soft white mound,  
Upsot, dead beat,—but of little Gabe  
No hide nor hair was found.

And here all hope soured on me  
Of my fellow-critter's aid;—  
I jest flopped down on my marrow-bones,  
Crotch-deep in the snow, and prayed.

. . . . .

By this, the torches was played out,  
And me and Isrul Parr  
Went off for some wood to a sheepfold  
That he said was somewhar thar.

We found it at last, and a little shed  
Where they shut up the lambs at night.  
We looked in and seen them huddled thar,  
So warm and sleepy and white;

And thar sot Little Breeches and chirped,  
As peart as ever you see,  
“I want a chaw of terbacker,  
And that’s what’s the matter of me.”

How did he git thar? Angels.  
He could never have walked in that storm:  
They jest scooped down and toted him  
To whar it was safe and warm.  
And I think that saving a little child,  
And fotching him to his own,  
Is a derned sight better business  
Than loafing around the Throne.

*Pike County Ballads, 1871*

## 5. When You Call Me That, Smile

OWEN WISTER

I left that company growing confidential over their leering stories, and I sought the saloon. It was very quiet and orderly. Beer in quart bottles at a dollar I had never met before; but saving its price, I found no complaint to make of it. Through folding doors I passed from the bar proper with its bottles and elk head back to the hall with its various tables. I saw a man sliding cards from a case, and across the table from him another man laying counters down. Near by was a second dealer pulling cards from the bottom of a pack, and opposite him a solemn old rustic piling and changing coins upon the cards which law already exposed.

But now I heard a voice that drew my eyes to the far corner of the room.

“Why didn’t you stay in Arizona?”

Harmless looking words as I write them down here. Yet at the sound of them I noticed the eyes of the others directed to that corner. What answer was given to them I did not hear, nor did I see who spoke. Then came another remark.

“Well, Arizona’s no place for amatures.”

This time the two card dealers that I stood near began to give a part of their attention to the group that sat in the corner. There was in me a desire to leave this room. So far my hours at Medicine

Bow had seemed to glide beneath a sunshine of merriment, of easy-going jocularly. This was suddenly gone, like the wind changing to north in the middle of a warm day. But I stayed, being ashamed to go.

Five or six players sat over in the corner at a round table where counters were piled. Their eyes were close upon their cards, and one seemed to be dealing a card at a time to each, with pauses and betting between. Steve was there and the Virginian; the others were new faces.

"No place for amatures," repeated the voice; and now I saw that it was the dealer's. There was in his countenance the same ugliness that his words conveyed.

"Who's that talkin'?" said one of the men near me, in a low voice.

"Trampas."

"What's he?"

"Cow-puncher, bronco-buster, tin-horn, most anything."

"Who's he talkin' at?"

"Think it's the black-headed guy he's talking at."

"That ain't supposed to be safe, is it?"

"Guess we're all goin' to find out in a few minutes."

"Been trouble between 'em?"

"They've not met before. Trampas don't enjoy losin' to a stranger."

"Fello's from Arizona, yu' say?"

"No. Virginia. He's recently back from havin' a look at Arizona. Went down there last year for a change. Works for the Sunk Creek outfit." And then the dealer lowered his voice still further and said something in the other man's ear, causing him to grin. After which both of them looked at me.

There had been silence over in the corner; but now the man Trampas spoke again.

"*And* ten," said he, sliding out some chips from before him. Very strange it was to hear him, how he contrived to make those words a personal taunt. The Virginian was looking at his cards. He might have been deaf.

"*And* twenty," said the next player, easily.

The next threw his cards down.

It was now the Virginian's turn to bet, or leave the game, and he did not speak at once.

Therefore Trampas spoke. "Your bet, you son-of-a—"

The Virginian's pistol came out, and his hand lay on the table,

holding it unaimed. And with a voice as gentle as ever, the voice that sounded almost like a caress, but drawling a very little more than usual, so that there was almost a space between each word, he issued his orders to the man Trampas:—

“When you call me that, *smile.*” And he looked at Trampas across the table.

Yes, the voice was gentle. But in my ears it seemed as if somewhere the bell of death was ringing; and silence, like a stroke, fell on the large room. All men present, as if by some magnetic current, had become aware of this crisis. In my ignorance, and the total stoppage of my thoughts, I stood stock-still, and noticed various people crouching, or shifting their positions.

“Sit quiet,” said the dealer, scornfully to the man near me. “Can’t you see he don’t want to push trouble? He has handed Trampas the choice to back down or draw his steel.”

Then, with equal suddenness and ease, the room came out of its strangeness. Voices and cards, the click of chips, the puff of tobacco, glasses lifted to drink,—this level of smooth relaxation hinted no more plainly of what lay beneath than does the surface tell of the depth of the sea.

*The Virginian*, 1902

## 6. Appanoose Jim and His Friends

JAMES STEVENS

Isis Dowell was just seventeen. She was an orphan and lived with her second cousin, a brakeman’s wife, a sanctified Methodist, but a mighty mean woman. There were five children in the family, and Isis had washed dishes in the boarding house since she was fourteen. Going to her work, she had to come down the alley behind Honest John’s shack. Usually she’d run back and forth three or four times a day. I had come back to the shack after I got out of the hospital, for the rent was paid on it until March, and there was quite a bit of grub stored in the kitchen. It was lonesome and mournful there for me now; but still I stayed around it more than I did the Silver Leaf; and this was on account of Isis Dowell.

I got acquainted with her soon after I went to live with Honest John. I liked her looks from the start. She was a slim girl, but

not at all gangling. She had a healthy swing when she walked along that was fine to watch, for she was strong and work hadn't seemed to have hurt her a particle. She was usually wearing an old coat of her second cousin's, and her shape didn't show in it very good; but when she wasn't wearing a hat her face looked very pretty. She had the biggest brown eyes, all silky-lashed, and how they would sparkle on winter mornings! But even when it was cold her cheeks only shone a soft, delicate pink, for they were nothing like the usual plump, apple-red kinds on the ranch girls I used to know. Her nose was slender-shaped, kind of intelligent-looking, like a schoolma'am's; and her mouth was soft and pretty, though her lips were rather thin sometimes. But she would get the most curious expressions around her mouth, whenever she had that far-away, angelic gaze; her lips would curve into the faintest smiles then, scarcely showing her white teeth, and her brown eyes would melt into the softest, dreamiest look, which would seem to pull my heart right up into my throat, making me feel like I did when I was seven years old in Iowa and got converted at a Methodist revival.

. . . . .

Hard Foot Rax, the plow-shaker, was a good singer, too; but he had a busy job and did most of his singing at night. Texas was his native State, and Rax was great on the cowboy ballads he had learned down in the Panhandle when he was a boy. Sometimes he would stretch out on his bunk and roar them by the hour. Most of them had twenty or more verses. A cow hand would never even hum a short song.

Hard Foot Rax was a mountain of a man and was about fifty years old. He looked much younger; for his lean belly, barrel chest, and shoulders that jutted out like big knots from his thick, red neck, didn't have much appearance of age. His hair was a tangle of stiff yellow bristles. His heavy eyebrows were a dirty-white color and reached almost up to his hair, for Hard Foot had about the poorest excuse for a forehead I had ever seen. He had little, pale-blue eyes. The skin over his heavy jaws and short, pudgy nose and clublike arms and hands was never tanned brown; it looked like he had a continual case of sunburn. When he was lying in his bunk the pale hair on his red arms had a frosty glimmer in the lantern light as he waved his paws, beating time to his songs. I was somehow afraid of him, though he seemed to be good-natured. And sometimes his cow hand songs made me

homesick for Idaho. But I did like to see Hard Foot jig. He was surprisingly light on his feet. He said he had been called "Cotton" down in the Texas country; but when he was taken into the team-hand tribe he was monikered "Hard Foot," on account of his wonderful jiggling. Some nights he would tell stories about driving big bands of cattle over the old Wyoming trail. I knew they were mostly lies, but he made them sound interesting. He was so big I could never imagine him on a cow pony.

Hard Foot was a first-rate plow-shaker, having the eye and the muscle for this job. Behind the high seat of the big machine a platform lay across the steel frame; and there Hard Foot Rax stood all day, watching the depth of the plowing and the run of dirt up the elevator belt, twisting the wheels that controlled the plow beam and the elevator, bellowing "Hi!" when a wagon was filled, and changing plowshares when one was dull. There were times when both bar and share had to be changed. The outfit weighed three hundred pounds, but Hard Foot never looked for help when it was to be thrown into a wagon and hauled to a blacksmith shop. Once he heaved the mass of steel into a dump wagon, and the chains that held the red bottom snapped like threads. It was then that Hard Foot Rax swelled his chest and stared straight for the first time into the eyes of the high-seat teamster, the king of the camp, the boss of the team hand tribe wherever he roved—Paddy, the great, dark devil, as Gager called him.

. . . . .

I had simply been a fool about women. That was the idea I had during the year that followed, as I batted about from pillar to post, without any ambition or purpose in life. I blamed my restlessness and general cussedness on Isis and Tiva. But I can't hold to that idea now. I can see young laborers nowadays coming and going in the same kind of torment and turmoil of soul; and they blame women as a rule, for the foolish and reckless things they do, just as I did. They are wrong, though it's a waste of time to tell them so; the fact is that they are having the battle with life which every man has when he is young—the battle he has when he gets to the point where he has to settle down to a job and get himself comfortably in it, or else cut loose and be a roving boomer, without a family and without a home.

It's frolic and fun with a kid, even when he is toiling away his ten hours a day at a regular man's job. It's still frolic and fun with the young fellow, even when he gets to the age where

he is proud of his muscles and the fresh whiskers on his face and the way he knocks the girls dead when he ogles them on the street. He still looks for fun in his job, the girls are just to play with, and life in general is just today and to-night and no more. But the time comes when he is bound to take women and work seriously; the time when he must see every little thing in his job and his private life as serious and important and worth thinking mighty soberly about. He must learn that women and work are the two realest propositions in all his years to come. If he doesn't he will get to continually cussing everything in life up one side and down the other simply because it isn't funny any more, and he becomes a crank. Or else he will go booming from one job to another all his days, looking everywhere for the frolicsome adventure he had as a kid. But you have to own a talent for this; you have to be able to keep on dreaming things, something like that girl, Isis, did. Life will just drab out on the average working man if he doesn't get to taking his little part of it as serious and important, and he will become mean and miserable and fit for nothing but the name of a crank.

Usually the young laborer comes out all right. He settles down to learning a trade that suits him, marries a girl of his own kind, and becomes a steady, sober, serious worker who takes a pride in his job and loves his home and family. If he has women folks like Indiana Beaut got among, he may sober down long before he is twenty-five. If he is wild and burly and bullheaded and proud of himself, like I was, it usually takes several hard-hitting years to tame him down. If he gets into the habit of booming over the country in those years and doesn't happen to meet up with a woman who suits him, and fails to get started in the trade he has a knack for, he is apt to never settle down to taking life seriously. That was the way of it with the old-time hobo laborers, in the days of the big jobs. On them a man could easily get into the way of being an adventurer or a crank. Nowadays you can trust the wild-acting young buck who tears around from one job to another to stay settled finally. The temptations to hobo and boom are about all gone.

*Brawnyman, 1926*

# The Feudal Lords of Spanish Days

HARVEY FERGUSON

The [Rio Grande country] is a land of fallen walls, littered with ruins of all ages and in all stages of decay. Tribes, cultures, classes have lived and died here, leaving their shells to crumble slowly in the dry preservative air. From the first rude buildings of the pre-pueblo people, lasting for centuries, to the ghostly mining camps of the seventies and eighties, where two or three old men live in towns built for thousands and spiders spin their webs over bars and pool tables in ornate deserted saloons, the whole procession of human life down the Rio Grande has left its record in adobe, stone and wood. Usually it has left some human vestige too, for the descendants of the men who built the first walls still are building new ones and almost every deserted gold town shelters some old timer who remembers the booms and battles of fifty years ago.

Of all the walls men built in this valley none has more nearly disappeared than those of the great adobe houses that belonged to the aristocracy in the years of Spanish empire. Adobe houses are many and there are still a few large ones built around courtyards but usually the spot where one of the famous families lived is marked, if at all, by a pile of sand.

Gente de razon these people called themselves, and the phrase, ringing with pride, means literally "the right people." They were called also ricos or rich ones and gente fina, the fine people. Their descendants still live here and many of them are valued citizens but these are triumphs of adaptation to a way of life wholly alien to their traditions. As a class the right people are gone.

In old Mexico the same aristocracy is now falling to pieces under a proletarian revolution, just as it fell after the invasion of the gringos in New Mexico three generations ago. To visit Mexico City now and meet the wistful remnant of the people who ruled under Diaz is to go back into the past. There one may still encounter the pride, the perfect courtesy and the absolute self-assurance which are born of the conviction that the right people should rule because they are the right people—that human life is a hierarchy based upon land and blood and privilege. And there one feels the same fragrance of charm that one discovers in the

records of old days on the Rio Grande. These men were proud and lazy and often they were cruel but the society they created had charm because it was imbued with respect for the past. Charm in human society is a cumulative thing and it does not survive rapid change. It depends upon the faithful observance of customs and traditions, slowly perfected. It requires that men shall live for generations in the same houses, tilling the same lands, having the same relations of class to class and man to man. Perhaps this aristocratic ideal was never more completely realized, on a small scale and in a rude way, than it was along the Rio Grande when the wars with the pueblos were over and the great valley was settled.

For a while after the conquest of De Vargas many settlers came to this new colony of the North. Soon fifteen thousand Spaniards lived along the river. New towns were built, campaigns were launched against the Navajos and Apaches, new missions were established to convert the Pueblos. Armed expeditions set out to conquer new lands. Daring priests mounted their mules and departed to risk their lives preaching Christ to the Moquis. The barren New Mexico hills were searched for gold and silver.

This burst of colonizing energy soon subsided. Neither gold nor silver was found in paying quantities. Even precious metals to make ornaments for the churches had to be imported. The Spaniards were always treasure-hunters and when it was learned that New Mexico contained little gold interest in it waned. It was found too that the country was a lean one and its arable lands soon were all taken up. But there was another reason why this colony became an isolated and neglected place. The Spanish Empire was dying. Power had passed to England. The splendid discipline which conquered South America and Mexico was falling to pieces. This colony was the last expansive thrust of religious empire in America. Faith in God and King had been its spiritual nourishment and both were on the wane. The rest of its story is a study in decay—the inevitable decay of pride and privilege sitting in isolation.

The lands of the Rio Grande region were granted in great tracts by the King of Spain, some of them to communities but most of them to individuals, so that a few aristocrats literally owned the earth. This land-owning class was probably never more than one-fiftieth of the whole population. The pueblo Indians were granted the lands about their villages and they maintained a precarious economic independence, tilling their own fields. The priests still

tried to make good Christians of them, but the effort became more and more perfunctory as its futility became apparent. The Pueblos tolerated the churches and went to mass on Sunday while still keeping their own heretical faith intact. In the early eighteenth century a junta was held to discuss whether they should be allowed to paint their faces. They are still painting their faces.

Some small landowners took up homesteads, mostly in the less desirable sections north of Santa Fe, where the valley is narrow and rugged. But in the South, where it is wide and fertile, nearly all of it was owned by a few rich men who claimed to be of pure Spanish blood. This southern region came to be known as Rio Abajo or lower river, the northern region as Rio Arriba or upper river, and the geographical division became more and more a social one. It was in the rugged upper valley that the fraternity of the Penitent Brothers, wholly a plebian organization, had its headquarters and its greatest strength. There, too, the Pueblos were strongest and most independent.

In this northern region the Pueblos still are strong and the Penitent Brothers still lash their bare backs every holy week. The Matachines still is danced, witches fly, serapes are woven on handlooms, and magical cures are worked at the shrine in Chimayo. The life of the humble still goes on much as it did a hundred years ago but their first lords and masters have disappeared. Here once more the mighty have fallen and if the meek have not inherited the earth they have at least clung to some of it with an astonishing tenacity. And here the collapse of pride and power has the beauty of completeness because this little aristocracy was so long cut off from the rest of the civilized world to work out its destiny alone.

It was about eight hundred miles from the Rio Grande to the nearest American settlement on the Missouri and more than a hundred years elapsed after the conquest before men found their way across that thirsty plain. Chihuahua was almost as far to the south. North and west lay wilderness, unexplored and impassible. But on the Rio Grande life became safe and easy for the right people. Apaches and Navajos raided outlying settlements and stole cattle and sheep but they seldom if ever struck the great houses of the rich.

These houses had been built as forts. With walls three or four feet thick they enclosed each a courtyard, called a placita, and behind this was always another square enclosed by a high adobe wall with quarters for slaves and peons built inside it. Here the

carts and wagons were kept and the horses could be driven in when danger threatened. Windows were barred and a trusted servant asked every comer his name and business before doors were opened. Storerooms were filled with grains and dried buffalo meat and a well in the courtyard supplied water. Life here was secure. It was shut in and well nourished. Each great house reproduced the isolation which beset the colony as a whole.

The men who owned these houses lived pleasant lazy lives. In the valley they raised grain, vegetables and grapes and on the mesas they pastured great herds of scrubby sheep, yielding little wool but abundant meat. All the work was done by peons who in effect were serfs. They were paid in goods and were never out of debt. Sons inherited the debts of their fathers and generations lived in bondage.

Law held the peon but not the patron. It provided that officers in the army and priests of the church could be tried only by their own peers. The army in New Mexico was at best a few hundred ragged peons but it provided berths and immunities for young men of the right people as did also the church, and the powerful landowner was just as immune as these by reason of his property. Always less than a thousand soldiers, priests, and gentlemen ruled the country.

This lower valley in the early eighteenth century, then, although surrounded by unmapped wilderness, was itself a well-settled and well-cultivated place where men had lived for generations. From Bernalillo to Socorro the great houses were only a few miles apart—long, low, recumbent structures with porches, supported by round wooden pillars, extending the full length of their gleaming whitewashed fronts. They looked as solid as the mountains but they existed only by the incessant toil of slaves who plastered the earthen walls and mended the flat dirt roofs after every heavy rain. They were all sheltered by old cottonwood trees with their generous spread of thick whispering foliage which seemed designed to create havens of shade in a land of burning sun. Sometimes the houses were surrounded by adobe walls and often in the old days the bushy vineyards and the fields of grain were enclosed by lower ones for labor was cheap and there were no other fences.

Along the roads passed many riders. Rich men rode fine horses with heavy silver-mounted saddles housed in bearskin. Poor men bestrode burros, sitting well back on a humble rump, dispensing both guidance and encouragement with a club, which is all the

equipment necessary for burro-riding. Women rode rarely, sometimes in chair-like side-saddles, sometimes on postillions. The peon commonly held his woman before him on his steed as he did a sack of corn for the mill. The only common vehicles were one-horse carts, made without iron, the huge wooden wheels sawn from the trunks of cottonwoods. The terrific screech of their ungreased wooden axles was a familiar voice of the valley. Quite early a few great coaches were imported by the richest men, and these, rolling on important social errands, were impressive symbols of an unquestionable power.

Within, the homes of the rich were Moorish. An oriental influence had been brought from Spain and it was strengthened by the scarcity of furniture. Bedsteads there were none but only mattresses, folded against the walls in daytime and covered with Navajo blankets, black, red and white. The wealth of a man showed in the quality of these coverings rather than in the amount or kind of his furniture for it was all home-made and included only a dining table, a few wooden chairs with rawhide seats and heavy carven chests for clothes and jewels. Most preferred to sit on the floors which were earthen but often covered with woolen carpets of native weave in black and white checker patterns. The walls were washed bonewhite with gypsum and covered with colored cloths to a height of four or five feet, so that the whitewash would not rub off. Pictures were few but mirrors in gold frames were much esteemed and these multiplied after the wagons began to come from Missouri until some of the salas offered the guest his own image from every angle. Nearly all the houses had sacred images in little corner shrines.

The principal room of every house was a long reception hall. Scant daylight shone in through translucent windows, wooden-barred. Cool, dim, and quiet were these great rooms—carefully guarded sanctuaries of faith, power and family life, where idle, soft-voiced women chatted away their long days, waiting for men who were truly both lords and masters.

For this society belonged to the vanished world in which man was supreme and woman only his pleasure and possession. Here the father was an absolute ruler by divine right and treated as a sacred being. His children, no matter how old, uncovered when he approached and they dared not smoke in his presence. He could chastise a grown son or give his daughter in marriage as easily as he could sell a horse or kill a slave. His power sprang from his loins and multiplied with his family. One man had thirty-six

legitimate children by three wives and almost all had large families of a darker shade by Indian concubines.

When men rule and women are subject the differentiating qualities of the sexes are always exaggerated, just as they are minimized when men and women meet on equal terms. So these men were belligerently, aggressively masculine. They were arrogant, lazy, truculent, cruel and brave. They ruled, fought, wandered, and made love. Cock fights and gambling were their sports. Commerce, except in slaves, horses and the products of their own lands, was beneath them, as were the professions. In 1831 the province contained only one doctor and no lawyers. There were almost no books except bibles.

Feuds were many and generally sprang from love affairs, for this was a time and place of romantic passion, furious and blind. There were few formal duels but many fights, especially at dances. A beauty promised the same dance to two young men of the proudest blood. The lie was passed and they met at dawn in the plaza. Their pistols cracked and both fell dead. They were men of honor, as were all of these ricos, and in a country where every man carried pistols on his saddle and a Spanish dagger at his belt, honor cost blood.

Life was not dull for these men. There were three long and adventurous journeys to be made every year. In August or September a fair was held at Taos where tribes of the plains and mountains came to trade with the Mexicans, offering captives as slaves and also furs and skins for knives and beads. Horses were sold and swapped and much property changed hands over races, cock pits and monte games. There were dances and fights and a great flow of red wine.

Those must have been strange and dangerous gatherings. Navajos, Apaches, Comanches, Arapahoes, perhaps a few Cheyennes all came to Taos and they were not peaceful Indians but warriors fresh from their raids with scalps at their belts and captive girls to sell, observing a precarious truce. The Taos Pueblos held a fiesta with ceremonial dances and footraces. Mexicans came, of every degree from ricos looking for bargains in human flesh to the poorest peon that could get there on a burro. Early in the eighteen hundreds tall blonde mountain men began to appear with their long rifles and packs of beaver—deadly men, forerunners of change and destruction.

Later in the fall the New Mexicans went east by way of Pecos across the mountains to the buffalo ranges in organized communal

hunts. The buffalo furnished the province with most of its beef for there were never many cattle on the Rio Grande. In the late eighteenth century these hunters from the valley killed as many as twelve thousand buffalo a year and rich and poor had meat. Almost every family had one horse that was kept for buffalo-hunting and nothing else—a swift horse trained to stick to his prey like a dog. The rider carried a lance with a twelve-inch blade, sharp as a razor, and he drove it through the crook of his left arm into the buffalo's heart and out again. If his weapon stuck between the ribs he was in for a fall.

Rich young men hunted luxuriously with peons coming behind to skin and butcher the kill and hang the meat in strips a yard long to dry in the sun. Dried buffalo meat cooked with chile and beans was the staple of the poor and a dish to be found on every table.

Sometimes they hunted wild mustangs on these expeditions, wearing them down by a relentless relay pursuit or driving them into some corner of the country where a trap-corral had been built. Often the wild horse, when he had been roped and thrown, was tied neck and neck to a burro half his size and the burro would always master him and bring him to camp.

In January there was another trip, called a *conducta*, to the southern fair at Chihuahua—a perilous journey of six hundred miles with danger from Apaches and from death by thirst in the desert. This, like the Taos fair, took a large part of the male population away. It was apparently led and organized by the ricos while many poor men went along to trade their woolen weaves for chocolate, silver and silks. The *conducta* that Lieutenant Pike saw drove also a herd of fifteen thousand sheep and was guarded by a small detachment of Mexican troops. It was the custom among the *gente de razon* for an affianced youth to make one of these expeditions for his prospective father-in-law and he was expected to bring back an Indian slave girl as a present for his beloved. This trip to Chihuahua was the only contact the New Mexicans had with the outside world. There they saw men and goods that had come across the sea and got some faint inkling of what lay beyond the Rio Grande.

In all this life of adventure and movement the women had no part. Their lives, before marriage, were a guarded and cloistered virginity and afterward one long series of pregnancies. It was necessary that many babies be born because so many died. The death of an infant was accepted as a matter of course. "One angel

more" was the usual spoken obituary, and the first gringos who came to New Mexico were shocked to see children's funerals moving through the streets at a brisk trot and to cheerful music with the tiny corpse often uncoffined.

These women tended, by reaction, to be everything the men were not. As the men were cruel the women were notably tender and compassionate. Kendall records how they saved the lives of the Texan captives, bringing food to them, secretly if need be, and he broadly hints that they brought love as well. For these women, after marriage, were not celebrated for fidelity to their proud masters. All early observers testify to this. Gregg remarks that "marriage changes the legal status of the parties but it scarcely affects their moral obligations," and Abert said that "nowhere is chastity less valued or expected."

This last is not exact. The male expected chastity of his bride and considered himself cheated if he did not get it. He would resent any invasion of his family with knife and gun. Yet infidelity was all but universal for this was almost the only possible form of feminine revolt against a complete and brutal masculine domination. To the blond invaders the women gave themselves especially, as though there had been some instinct in the blood to breed to the coming conqueror. Both of the Taos conspiracies against the American occupation were betrayed to the Americans by Mexican women. When Doniphan evacuated Chihuahua his army was followed by a crowd of Mexican girls in men's clothing who trailed his soldiers and camped with them in the desert until he drove them all back home.

These women in all essentials were slaves and they had the deep duplicity and the spirit of revolt, unresting even when only half conscious, which tyranny always breeds. From this same source doubtless sprang their quick warm sympathy for everything helpless and oppressed—for children, captives and motherless lambs. "Pobrecito!" (poor little thing) was an exclamation often on their lips. It comforted the ears of the Texan captives all through their march. The word is still often heard all through Mexico, old and new, and almost always from a woman. It articulates a feminine protest against the cruelty of man, which perhaps never achieved a more complete and bloody expression than it did in the empire and colonies of Spain.

In their Moorish houses these women lived like inmates of a harem. Slaves did all the work—ground the corn on metates, baked the bread in hive-like outdoor ovens, tended the cauldrons

that hung before the wide cooking-hearths, beat thick chocolate to a froth in wooden bowls. There were five meals a day and three of them were heavy ones. It is no wonder these women, married at fourteen and fifteen, were fat and middle-aged before they were thirty.

All smoked corn-husk cigarettes and all drank native wine, copiously, with meals and between them. Grape brandy was made but used sparingly and chiefly as a medicine. One old man, who had been a youth of the aristocracy in its decline, assured me that American whisky had done much to ruin the ricos. Accustomed only to wine they could not stand the deadly corn juice of the invaders.

For marriage the girls could only wait and take what their masters willed. Some were promised before they could walk. Usually a suitor called with his parents on the parents of the chosen girl, and if they agreed she might be called in, as a special indulgence. If no refusal was sent in eight days, the man was accepted. Betrothals were often long as they still are in Mexico City where the girl dare not even dance with any but her affianced though he keep her waiting for years while he had the run of the town. One wealthy New Mexican, becoming engaged to a girl of thirteen and humanely judging her too young for marriage, sent her to a convent for four years to keep her safe and she became celebrated as the best-educated woman of her time. A few of the girls went to Durango to school but many never learned to read. Small private schools were kept in New Mexico but only for boys.

There was much visiting among the houses of the rich, especially late in the afternoon when chocolate was served, and then this society exhibited all its graces. It moved with grace, as Spanish society always does, and it had an eye for appearances. You must picture the men of that early day dressed in buckskin dyed black, well cut by native tailors and ornamented with silver buttons. Their hair was long and hung in queues on their necks. They wore full beards and moustaches and wide flat black hats imported from Mexico. Each had over his shoulder a blanket called a serape, of bright colors and striking pattern, and it might be worth as much as two hundred dollars. The women wore short skirts, often of red wool, and low cut bodices, and each always carried a shawl. The quality of this reboso marked her wealth and station as did the serape that of the man.

Manners were elaborate, ceremonial and truly charming, as they still are wherever Spanish influence lingers. Bows were profound

and a man took off his hat even to offer a light for a cigarette. Salutation was an art, with room for originality. "May you live to be a thousand, sir!" "And may you, sir, live to see the last of my years!" Where men go armed they speak with exaggerated deference.

These people were not afraid to touch each other. When old friends and relatives met, all embraced and kissed—a custom still sometimes to be seen. Girls publicly embraced and kissed male friends whom they would never see alone unless in marriage or by stealth. Men embraced each other, kissed on the cheek and expressed the degree of their affection by the heartiness with which they hammered each other on the back.

All sat usually on the floor and drank their chocolate from hammered silver mugs. All service was silver—even the bowls and ewers used for washing.

These people were without a formal art but not without a culture. Where there is no written literature poetry escapes the danger of becoming the possession of a class. Here almost everyone was a poet of a sort. Almost every youth could strum some kind of stringed instrument, serenade his lady and sing verses of his own making. They varied in kind from the innumerable couplets and quatrains that embodied the folk wisdom to long narrative poems celebrating important events. The latter were sometimes written down but they seem never to have been associated with the names of authors. All poems and stories were common property as were also the dramas and charades they enacted. Some of these came from Spain but there was a great deal of indigenous work, most of it now forever lost. It was the kind of rich compost of folk tale and folk fancy, of rhythm and tradition from which a literature may spring but here it was doomed never to bear its fruit.

There were many dances and everyone danced, rich and poor, layman and priest. Formal dances were held in all the houses of the rich and these were called bailes or balls while the dances of the common people were called fandangos. At the bailes they performed all the old square dances with intricate figures, requiring both knowledge and command on the part of the leader. The musicians were commonly peons and often blind. They played fiddles and a stringed instrument like a guitar which was often home-made. Sometimes a woman with a special gift for verse sat on the platform beside the players and as each couple passed she improvised a rhyme about them, to the hilarious merriment of all. They danced also waltzes both fast and slow and their most dis-

tinctive dance was called Cuna or cradle waltz. The whirling dancers embraced each other loosely about the shoulders, making a cradle, "which was never bottomless" as one shocked observer from Missouri remarked.

About Christmas time all New Mexico danced. There were dances of every kind, both sacred and profane, for in winter the Pueblos held their most elaborate dances and in the holidays there was dancing in every great house and blind men rode fiddling through every village to gather the slaves and peons for fandangos. To violins from across the sea and to savage drums, to courtly minuets and to the rolling chant of the Katchinas, all up and down the valley feet went dancing.

Such was the life within walls of the right people—a life of feasting, dancing, fighting and amorous intrigue.

*Rio Grande, 1933*

# The Golden Army Takes the California Trail

ARCHER BUTLER HULBERT

*Independence, Mo.*

April 30, 1849

*Dear Dad:*

Millions of stars are looking down on these rolling plains of Western Missouri where the many tracks of the California Trail curve out from this town of Independence across "the Line" into the Indian Territory beyond [over the present site of Kansas City, Missouri.]. On every side, as far as you can see to-night, earthly "stars"—the camp-fires of all this multitude of eager, restless Forty-Niners—twinkle on the ground, being fed by members of the most excited army that was ever assembled in the New World, every one impatient for mud to dry and spring grass to grow so that these shaggy regiments can get on their way.

Had I fifty hands I could not jot down a tenth part of what I hear, or sketch a fraction of the memorable things I see which deserve attention. Never did Life and Death hustle each other on a narrower pathway. Look at one proof of this: a hundred feet from me, to the right, under a canvas thrown across a broken wagon wheel a man from Pennsylvania is dying of cholera; nothing anyone can do will help him. A hundred feet in the opposite direction a dynamic derelict whom we've nicknamed "Old Pickpan" because his total baggage consists of a pickaxe and a dish pan is celebrating to-morrow's departure for the land of gold by one last determined assault on Demon Rum, and nothing anyone can do will help him, either. Just now, between his cups and hiccoughs he is—I had almost said "singing"—emitting the newly arrived ballad from London entitled "Oh, the Good Time Is Come at Last." Holding in each hand (as he fondly supposes) a nugget of gold, he chants amid antics:—

The Miser looks with wistful eye,  
The Spendthrift hails with glee, Sir,  
This Golden Scheme now set afloat  
By many a Company, Sir.

In breathless haste they all set off,  
And like the Gilpin chase, Sir,  
See Nations for the Ingots rare,  
To California race, Sir.

Across this vast, rolling bivouac ground you see the "Nations" celebrating, like Pickpan, or lying in windrows under blankets in every posture of repose; or you hear the wail of fiddles, the strumming of banjos, or the snap of cards laid down vindictively on improvised, lantern-lighted "tables." Our unquenchable songster continues his lyrical prophecy of finding gold in a land which would flow with something better, to his way of thinking, than milk and honey:—

Instead of drinking pump water  
Or even half-and-half, Sir,  
We all will live like jolly souls,  
And Port and Sherry quaff, Sir.  
In 'spirits' we will keep ourselves,—  
The Mettle's coming in, Sir.  
And not a man will now be found  
Who'll say he wants for 'tin,' Sir.

In the light of a dying fire to the left we see a sturdy family at their even-prayer, with a fine old patriarch face uplifted to the starlight, describing an equal faith in future happiness, but in terms at variance with Pickpan's; the stately cadences roll across to us above the derelict's jargon:—

Whither shall I go from thy spirit?  
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?  
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:  
If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.  
If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost  
parts of the sea;  
Even there shall thy hand lead me,  
And thy right hand shall hold me. . . .  
Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee;  
But the night shineth as the day:  
The darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

In a strange way the two voices—like those of different "Nations"—blend in the evening breeze, expressive of different, but unconquerable, philosophies:—

*(From the right)*

Oh, the Good time has come at last,  
We need no more complain, Sir.  
The rich can live in luxury  
And the poor can do the same, Sir.  
For the Good time has come at last,  
And as we all are told, Sir,  
We shall be rich at once now,  
With California Gold, Sir.

*(From the left)*

. . . Thou hast possessed my reins. . . .  
When I awake, I am still with thee.

No earlier Cause ever called together in the New World such a strange medley of men, so curious a mass as this Golden Army. There they lie amid their fading fires of prairie grass, of tepee poles, of cottonwood stumps, of chokecherry wood, of sagebrush, of greasewood—rich men, poor men, beggar men, thieves; farmers, lawyers, doctors, merchants, preachers, workmen; Republicans, Whigs, Federalists, Abolitionists; Baptists, Methodists, Transcendentalists, Campbellites, Millerites, Presbyterians, Mormons; white men, black men, yellow men, Germans, Russians, Poles, Chileans, Swiss, Spaniards; sailors, steamboat men, lumber men, gamblers; the lame, squint-eyed, pockmarked, one-armed; the bearded, the beardless, the mustachioed, side-whiskered, and goateed; singing, cursing, weeping, and laughing, in their sleep; squaws in royal blankets, prostitutes in silk, brave women in knickerbockers that reach to the shoe-tops, covered by knee-length skirts of similar material; the witty, nitwits, and witless; pet cats, kittens, canaries, dogs, coons; cherished accordions, melodeons, flutes, fiddles, banjos; fortune-tellers, phrenologists, mesmerists, harlots, card sharks, ventriloquists, and evangelists from almost every state, nation, county, duchy, bishopric, island, peninsula, bay, and isthmus in all the world—dreaming of gold where those California trails zigzag away over a hundred rough knolls where the Kansas and Missouri rivers have quarreled for centuries for right of way.

To the left of our wagon train a tragedy of proportions is being enacted by candlelight in an open tent. An emigrant has been celebrating so seriously this epoch-making departure from civilization that he is now unable to take advantage of his last chance to write home because his hand has forgotten the gentle art of penmanship.

He is sober enough to know he must write; his grief at thinking that it will be his last letter vies with his dismay at not being able to write it. The two procure him another drink which, automatically, forwards the matter, for nothing except dictation is now possible. But this proves slow work, because each draft either contains something objectionable to the dictator or else reminds him too forcefully of the long separation, with the result that he kisses the paper, befouling it with tears and his nose with ink. Finally a last determined effort results in success. One partner doing the writing and the other holding the old man off, although, when the fatal moment of sealing and addressing comes, the latter has to call in outside help. The letter read:—

Mrs. Robert S——  
Bellefontaine, Iowa

Dear Wife: Kiss the baby. Border line, all well. Kiss the baby. Independence, Missouri River. Kiss the baby. Had a good time. Last letter. Cross the river. Tell the baby California. Dear wife all well. Tell Johnnie papa plenty of money California. Kiss the baby.

Robert

The fiddles, songs, and prayers, if not the click of cards, cease as I write, and our army stretches itself this May Day Eve for its last night or two by the Missouri to dream of home—of Otter Creek in Vermont, of “Cobossy” Lake in Maine, of Chartier’s Creek in Old Washington in Pennsylvania, of Quinebaug in Massachusetts, of the Barron in Kentucky, the Patoka in Indiana, the Mullica in old Jersey, the Sacandaga in New York. Why are they here? Gold. Adventure. And one of these they are sure to get! As for me, well, I’m here to “see the world,” throw off this malaria and play the greenhorn soldier of fortune along with this generous, so-called “Uncle Bob” of ours. One thing: he could not be kinder to me if he really was your brother, Dad, but I must say he circulates a *spirit*-ual cheer wherever he goes as no brother of yours could!

There in the moonlight stand fourteen very solid reasons why this Uncle Bob is going to California—that many substantial wagons, not counting Uncle’s library-bedroom-on-wheels, which we call the “Ark,” and the four-wheeled chuck wagon. The freighters are loaded with two thousand pounds of cargo, the profitable part being powder, shot, and percussion caps for the Californians—the powder being worth out there almost an ounce of gold (\$18.00) per pound. There is Uncle’s lure, combined with the adventure

across a world none of us ever saw and a grand voyage around the Horn for a homecoming.

A great many have joined the army of gold-seekers this year because of the reports of continued successes in the "Diggings" last autumn.

Foreigners have eagerly flocked across the seas, partly because of the hope to acquire wealth in the mines and partly because the recent unsettled conditions in Europe would have led to migration even if Mr. Marshall had not picked up those grains of gold in his mill-race a year ago.

The newspapers have given gold news the right of way and, by reprinting the reports of government agents on the spot, have created a popular confidence in the reality of Marshall's discovery. Steamboat companies have flooded the landscape with alluring invitations to go to California in ease in their commodious floating palaces. No one cause explains it all—everything is calling to California!

Peering through my tent-flaps, I observe the commander-in-chief of our little company in this great army, Captain Meek, of the famous pioneer Meek family, and his two swarthy adjutant-generals, known familiarly as Wagonhound and Ox Bow, accompany Uncle Bob to his great Ark, and linger over a night-cap drawn from one of several casks of private stock which repose in the innermost recesses of that chariot.

There in the dark the last words are spoken, the last reckonings made, the last recountings summarized. "We" consist, as I said, of sixteen masterpieces of wagon building, including the Ark and a chuck-wagon; four mules to a wagon and three to spare for each; one driver to a wagon; four muleteers-at-large; upward of thirty men and over a hundred animals. "Snug outfit," says Uncle, looking down our line of wagons, hopeful, sanguine. "We'd better be," said Meek, taking his nose out of his tin cup. "Right fit," said Uncle, a little later. "Can't be too fit," said Meek. I am reminded of the endless attention to detail of these last days on the part of this triumvirate of ours, Meek, Wagonhound, and Ox Bow, to make us approach Uncle Bob's dictum, "the best outfit on wheels." "No, we're not so bad off," was Meek's comment in the end.

Those words meant a dozen things I knew and probably a hundred I didn't know. It meant that very few irritable, petulant men had been included among those hired to mule-whack us across the plains. It meant that the wagons were built of seasoned lumber. It meant that the tires were put on with a bolt in each

felloe and a nut and screw on the bolt—so that when the spokes began to work in the hub they could be tightened by putting leather or something under the tire and drawing it up with the nut. It meant that hub and axles were large in proportion to the wheels, with at least three-inch arms. That the stakes were high so that, if lightened, the wagon-beds could be raised a foot or more from the bolsters when fording streams. That the beds themselves were caulked as tight as the best of boats. That the stakes holding the bed had iron braces forward and backward, to prevent their giving way on the steep pitches. That the half springs were strong and heavy, but not fastened to the bolster. That the forward wheels were just about as high as the back wheels. That the bows of the wagon-top were fitted to staples on the main box. That a cord passing through rings on the outer covering of the wagon-tops and under the carriage knobs on the main box allowed the tops to be tightened at will, much as you would tighten the head of a drum. It meant that the mules' sweat collars were fastened to the main collars. That every animal had a half-inch manila lariat forty feet long, with a picket. That every saddle was a Spanish tree and skirt only, with crupper, breast strap, and blankets to put under instead of a finished padded saddle. That for every man we carried a hundred twenty-five pounds of flour, fifty pounds of cured ham, fifty pounds of smoked side bacon; thirty pounds of sugar, six pounds of ground coffee, one pound of tea, a pound and a half of cream of tartar, two pounds of soda or good saleratus, three pounds of salt, a bushel of dried fruit, one sixth of a bushel of beans, twenty-five pounds of rice, sixteen and a half pounds of hard or "pilot" bread, and pepper, ginger, citric acid, and tartaric acid "to suit."

*The Forty-Niners*, 1931

# Tennessee's Partner

BRET HARTE

I do not think that we ever knew his real name. Our ignorance of it certainly never gave us any social inconvenience, for at Sandy Bar in 1854 most men were christened anew. Sometimes these appellatives were derived from some distinctiveness of dress, as in the case of "Dungaree Jack"; or from some peculiarity of habit, as shown in "Saleratus Bill," so called from an undue proportion of that chemical in his daily bread; or from some unlucky slip, as exhibited in "The Iron Pirate," a mild, inoffensive man, who earned that baleful title by his unfortunate mispronunciation of the term "iron pyrites." Perhaps this may have been the beginning of a rude heraldry; but I am constrained to think that it was because a man's real name in that day rested solely upon his own unsupported statement. "Call yourself Clifford, do you?" said Boston, addressing a timid newcomer with infinite scorn; "hell is full of such Cliffords!" He then introduced the unfortunate man, whose name happened to be really Clifford, as "Jay-bird Charley,"—an unhallowed inspiration of the moment, that clung to him ever after.

But to return to Tennessee's Partner, whom we never knew by any other than this relative title; that he had ever existed as a separate and distinct individuality we only learned later. It seems that in 1853 he left Poker Flat to go to San Francisco, ostensibly to procure a wife. He never got any farther than Stockton. At that place he was attracted by a young person who waited upon the table at the hotel where he took his meals. One morning he said something to her which caused her to smile not unkindly, to somewhat coquettishly break a plate of toast over his upturned, serious, simple face, and to retreat to the kitchen. He followed her, and emerged a few moments later, covered with more toast and victory. That day week they were married by a Justice of the Peace, and returned to Poker Flat. I am aware that something more might be made of this episode, but I prefer to tell it as it was current at Sandy Bar,—in the gulches and barrooms,—where all sentiment was modified by a strong sense of humor.

Of their married felicity but little is known, perhaps for the reason that Tennessee, then living with his partner, one day took occasion to say something to the bride on his own account, at which,

it is said, she smiled not unkindly and chastely retreated,—this time as far as Marysville, where Tennessee followed her, and where they went to housekeeping without the aid of a Justice of the Peace. Tennessee's Partner took the loss of his wife simply and seriously, as was his fashion. But to everybody's surprise, when Tennessee one day returned from Marysville, without his partner's wife,—she having smiled and retreated with somebody else,—Tennessee's Partner was the first man to shake his hand and greet him with affection. The boys who had gathered in the cañon to see the shooting were naturally indignant. Their indignation might have found vent in sarcasm but for a certain look in Tennessee's Partner's eye that indicated a lack of humorous appreciation. In fact, he was a grave man, with a steady application to practical detail which was unpleasant in a difficulty.

Meanwhile a popular feeling against Tennessee had grown up on the Bar. He was known to be a gambler; he was suspected to be a thief. In these suspicions Tennessee's Partner was equally compromised; his continued intimacy with Tennessee after the affair above quoted could only be accounted for on the hypothesis of a co-partnership of crime. At last Tennessee's guilt became flagrant. One day he overtook a stranger on his way to Red Dog. The stranger afterward related that Tennessee beguiled the time with interesting anecdote and reminiscence, but illogically concluded the interview in the following words: "And now, young man, I'll trouble you for your knife, your pistols, and your money. You see your weppings might get you into trouble at Red Dog, and your money's a temptation to the evilly disposed. I think you said your address was San Francisco. I shall endeavor to call." It may be stated here that Tennessee had a fine flow of humor, which no business preoccupation could wholly subdue.

This exploit was his last. Red Dog and Sandy Bar made common cause against the highwayman. Tennessee was hunted in very much the same fashion as his prototype, the grizzly. As the toils closed around him, he made a desperate dash through the Bar, emptying his revolver at the crowd before the Arcade Saloon, and so on up Grizzly Cañon; but at its farther extremity he was stopped by a small man on a gray horse. The men looked at each other a moment in silence. Both were fearless, both self-possessed and independent; and both types of a civilization that in the seventeenth century would have been called heroic, but, in the nineteenth, simply "reckless." "What have you got there?—I call," said Tennessee, quietly. "Two bowers and an ace," said the stranger,

as quietly, showing two revolvers and a bowie knife. "That takes me," returned Tennessee; and with this gamblers' epigram, he threw away his useless pistol, and rode back with his captor.

It was a warm night. The cool breeze which usually sprang up with the going down of the sun behind the *chaparral*-crested mountain was that evening withheld from Sandy Bar. The little cañon was stifling with heated resinous odors, and the decaying driftwood on the Bar sent forth faint, sickening exhalations. The feverishness of day, and its fierce passions, still filled the camp. Lights moved restlessly along the bank of the river, striking no answering reflection from its tawny current. Against the blackness of the pines the windows of the old loft above the express office stood out staringly bright; and through their curtainless panes the loungers below could see the forms of those who were even then deciding the fate of Tennessee. And above all this, etched on the dark firmament, rose the Sierra, remote and passionless, crowned with remoter passionless stars.

The trial of Tennessee was conducted as fairly as was consistent with a judge and jury who felt themselves to some extent obliged to justify, in their verdict, the previous irregularities of arrest and indictment. The law of Sandy Bar was implacable, but not vengeful. The excitement and personal feeling of the chase were over; with Tennessee safe in their hands they were ready to listen patiently to any defense, which they were already satisfied was insufficient. There being no doubt in their own minds, they were willing to give the prisoner the benefit of any that might exist. Secure in the hypothesis that he ought to be hanged, on general principles, they indulged him with more latitude of defense than his reckless hardihood seemed to ask. The Judge appeared to be more anxious than the prisoner, who, otherwise unconcerned, evidently took a grim pleasure in the responsibility he had created. "I don't take any hand in this yer game," had been his invariable, but good-humored reply to all questions. The Judge—who was also his captor—for a moment vaguely regretted that he had not shot him "on sight," that morning, but presently dismissed this human weakness as unworthy of the judicial mind. Nevertheless, when there was a tap at the door, and it was said that Tennessee's Partner was there on behalf of the prisoner, he was admitted at once without question. Perhaps the younger members of the jury, to whom the proceedings were becoming irksomely thoughtful, hailed him as a relief.

For he was not, certainly, an imposing figure. Short and stout,

with a square face, sunburned into a preternatural redness, clad in a loose duck "jumper," and trousers streaked and splashed with red soil, his aspect under any circumstances would have been quaint, and was now even ridiculous. As he stooped to deposit at his feet a heavy carpetbag he was carrying, it became obvious, from partially developed legends and inscriptions, that the material with which his trousers had been patched had been originally intended for a less ambitious covering. Yet he advanced with great gravity, and after having shaken the hand of each person in the room with labored cordiality, he wiped his serious, perplexed face on a red bandanna handkerchief, a shade lighter than his complexion, laid his powerful hand upon the table to steady himself, and thus addressed the Judge:—

"I was passin' by," he began, by way of apology, "and I thought I'd just step in and see how things was gittin' on with Tennessee thar,—my pardner. It's a hot night. I disremember any sich weather before on the Bar."

He paused a moment, but nobody volunteering any other meteorological recollection, he again had recourse to his pocket handkerchief, and for some moments mopped his face diligently.

"Have you anything to say in behalf of the prisoner?" said the Judge, finally.

"Thet's it," said Tennessee's Partner, in a tone of relief. "I come yar as Tennessee's pardner,—knowing him nigh on four year, off and on, wet and dry, in luck and out o' luck. His ways ain't allers my ways, but thar ain't any p'int in that young man, thar ain't any liveliness as he's been up to, as I don't know. And you sez to me, sez you,—confidential-like, and between man and man,—sez you, 'Do you know anything in his behalf?' and I sez to you, sez I,—confidential-like, as between man and man,—'What should a man know of his pardner?'"

"Is this all you have to say?" asked the Judge, impatiently, feeling, perhaps, that a dangerous sympathy of humor was beginning to humanize the Court.

"Thet's so," continued Tennessee's Partner. "It ain't for me to say anything agin' him. And now, what's the case? Here's Tennessee wants money, wants it bad, and doesn't like to ask it of his old pardner. Well, what does Tennessee do? He lays for a stranger, and he fetches that stranger. And you lays for *him*, and you fetches *him*; and the honors is easy. And I put it to you, bein' a fa'r-minded man, and to you, gentlemen, all, as fa'r-minded men, ef this isn't so?"

"Prisoner," said the Judge, interrupting, "have you any questions to ask this man?"

"No! no!" continued Tennessee's Partner, hastily. "I play this yer hand alone. To come down to the bed rock, it's just this: Tennessee, thar, has played it pretty rough and expensive-like on a stranger, and on this yer camp. And now, what's the fair thing? Some would say more; some would say less. Here's seventeen hundred dollars in coarse gold and a watch, it's about all my pile,—and call it square!" And before a hand could be raised to prevent him, he had emptied the contents of the carpetbag upon the table.

For a moment his life was in jeopardy. One or two men sprang to their feet, several hands groped for hidden weapons, and a suggestion to "throw him from the window" was only overridden by a gesture from the Judge. Tennessee laughed. And apparently oblivious of the excitement, Tennessee's Partner improved the opportunity to mop his face again with his handkerchief.

When order was restored, and the man was made to understand, by the use of forcible figures and rhetoric, that Tennessee's offense could not be condoned by money, his face took a more serious and sanguinary hue, and those who were nearest to him noticed that his rough hand trembled slightly on the table. He hesitated a moment as he slowly returned the gold to the carpet-bag, as if he had not yet entirely caught the elevated sense of justice which swayed the tribunal, and was perplexed with the belief that he had not offered enough. Then he turned to the Judge, and saying, "This yer is a lone hand, played alone, and without my pardner," he bowed to the jury and was about to withdraw, when the Judge called him back. "If you have anything to say to Tennessee, you had better say it now." For the first time that evening the eyes of the prisoner and his strange advocate met. Tennessee smiled, showed his white teeth, and, saying, "Euchred, old man!" held out his hand. Tennessee's Partner took it in his own, and saying, "I just dropped in as I was passin' to see how things was gettin' on," let the hand passively fall, and adding that "it was a warm night," again mopped his face with his handkerchief, and without another word withdrew.

The two men never again met each other alive. For the unparalleled insult of a bribe offered to Judge Lynch—who, whether bigoted, weak, or narrow, was at least incorruptible—firmly fixed in the mind of that mythical personage any wavering determination of Tennessee's fate; and at the break of day he was marched, closely guarded, to meet it at the top of Marley's Hill.

How he met it, how cool he was, how he refused to say anything, how perfect were the arrangements of the committee, were all duly reported, with the addition of a warning moral and example to all future evil doers, in the *Red Dog Clarion*, by its editor, who was present, and to whose vigorous English I cheerfully refer the reader. But the beauty of that midsummer morning, the blessed amity of earth and air and sky, the awakened life of the free woods and hills, the joyous renewal and promise of Nature, and above all, the infinite serenity that thrilled through each, was not reported, as not being a part of the social lesson. And yet, when the weak and foolish deed was done, and a life, with its possibilities and responsibilities, had passed out of the misshapen thing that dangled between earth and sky, the birds sang, the flowers bloomed, the sun shone, as cheerily as before; and possibly the *Red Dog Clarion* was right.

Tennessee's Partner was not in the group that surrounded the ominous tree. But as they turned to disperse, attention was drawn to the singular appearance of a motionless donkey cart halted at the side of the road. As they approached, they at once recognized the venerable "Jenny" and the two-wheeled cart as the property of Tennessee's Partner,—used by him in carrying dirt from his claim; and a few paces distant the owner of the equipage himself, sitting under a buckeye tree, wiping the perspiration from his glowing face. In answer to an inquiry, he said he had come for the body of the "diseased," "if it was all the same to the committee." He didn't wish to "hurry anything"; he could "wait." He was not working that day; and when the gentlemen were done with the "diseased," he would take him. "Ef thar is any present," he added, in his simple, serious way, "as would care to jine in the fun'l, they kin come." Perhaps it was from a sense of humor, which I have already intimated was a feature of Sandy Bar,—perhaps it was from something even better than that; but two thirds of the loungers accepted the invitation at once.

It was noon when the body of Tennessee was delivered into the hands of his partner. As the cart drew up to the fatal tree, we noticed that it contained a rough, oblong box,—apparently made from a section of sluicing,—and half filled with bark and the tassels of pine. The cart was further decorated with slips of willow, and made fragrant with buckeye blossoms. When the body was deposited in the box, Tennessee's Partner drew over it a piece of tarred canvas, and gravely mounting the narrow seat in front, with his feet upon the shafts, urged the little donkey forward. The

equipage moved slowly on, at that decorous pace which was habitual with "Jenny" even under less solemn circumstances. The men—half curiously, half jestingly, but all good-humoredly—strolled along beside the cart; some in advance, some a little in the rear of the homely catafalque. But, whether from the narrowing of the road or some present sense of decorum, as the cart passed on, the company fell to the rear in couples, keeping step, and otherwise assuming the external show of a formal procession. Jack Folinsbee, who had at the outset played a funeral march in dumb show upon an imaginary trombone, desisted, from a lack of sympathy and appreciation,—not having, perhaps, your true humorist's capacity to be content with the enjoyment of his own fun.

The way led through Grizzly Cañon,—by this time clothed in funereal drapery and shadows. The redwoods, burying their moccasined feet in the red soil, stood in Indian file along the track, trailing an uncouth benediction from their bending boughs upon the passing bier. A hare, surprised into helpless inactivity, sat upright and pulsating in the ferns by the roadside, as the *cortège* went by. Squirrels hastened to gain a secure outlook from higher boughs; and the blue jays, spreading their wings, fluttered before them like outriders, until the outskirts of Sandy Bar were reached, and the solitary cabin of Tennessee's Partner.

Viewed under more favorable circumstances, it would not have been a cheerful place. The unpicturesque site, the rude and unlovely outlines, the unsavory details, which distinguish the nest-building of the California miner, were all here, with the dreariness of decay superadded. A few paces from the cabin there was a rough inclosure, which, in the brief days of Tennessee's Partner's matrimonial felicity, had been used as a garden, but was now overgrown with fern. As we approached it we were surprised to find that what we had taken for a recent attempt at cultivation was the broken soil about an open grave.

The cart was halted before the inclosure; and rejecting the offers of assistance with the same air of simple self-reliance he had displayed throughout, Tennessee's Partner lifted the rough coffin on his back, and deposited it, unaided, within the shallow grave. He then nailed down the board which served as a lid; and mounting the little mound of earth beside it, took off his hat, and slowly mopped his face with his handkerchief. This the crowd felt was a preliminary to speech; and they disposed themselves variously on stumps and boulders, and sat expectant.

"When a man," began Tennessee's Partner, slowly, "has been

running free all day, what's the natural thing for him to do? Why, to come home. And if he ain't in a condition to go home, what can his best friend do? Why, bring him home! And here's Tennessee has been running free, and we brings him home from his wandering." He paused, and picked up a fragment of quartz, rubbed it thoughtfully on his sleeve, and went on: "It ain't the first time that I've packed him on my back, as you see'd me now. It ain't the first time that I brought him to this yer cabin when he couldn't help himself; it ain't the first time that I and 'Jinny' have waited for him on yon hill, and picked him up and so fetched him home, when he couldn't speak, and didn't know me. And now that it's the last time, why,—" he paused, and rubbed the quartz gently on his sleeve,—"you see it's sort of rough on his pardner. And now, gentlemen," he added, abruptly, picking up his long-handled shovel, "the fun'l's over; and my thanks, and Tennessee's thanks, to you for your trouble."

Resisting any proffers of assistance, he began to fill in the grave, turning his back upon the crowd, that after a few moments' hesitation gradually withdrew. As they crossed the little ridge that hid Sandy Bar from view, some, looking back, thought they could see Tennessee's Partner, his work done, sitting upon the grave, his shovel between his knees, and his face buried in his red bandanna handkerchief. But it was argued by others that you couldn't tell his face from his handkerchief at that distance; and this point remained undecided.

In the reaction that followed the feverish excitement of that day, Tennessee's Partner was not forgotten. A secret investigation had cleared him of any complicity in Tennessee's guilt, and left only a suspicion of his general sanity. Sandy Bar made a point of calling on him and proffering various uncouth, but well-meant kindnesses. But from that day his rude health and great strength seemed visibly to decline; and when the rainy season fairly set in, and the tiny grass-blades were beginning to peep from the rocky mound above Tennessee's grave, he took to his bed.

One night, when the pines beside the cabin were swaying in the storm, and trailing their slender fingers over the roof, and the roar and rush of the swollen river were heard below, Tennessee's Partner lifted his head from the pillow, saying, "It is time to go for Tennessee; I must put 'Jinny' in the cart"; and would have risen from his bed but for the restraint of his attendant. Struggling, he still pursued his singular fancy: "There, now, steady, 'Jinny,'—

steady, old girl. How dark it is! Look out for the ruts,—and look out for him, too, old gal. Sometimes, you know, when he's blind drunk, he drops down right in the trail. Keep on straight up to the pine on the top of the hill. Thar—I told you so!—thar he is,—coming this way, too,—all by himself, sober, and his face a-shining. Tennessee! Pardner!”

And so they met.

*The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Sketches, 1870*

# Beecher's Island

JOHN G. NEIHARDT

Summer turned.  
Where blackbirds chattered and the scub oaks burned  
In meadows of the Milk and Musselshell,  
The fatted bison sniffed the winter-smell  
Beneath the whetted stars, and drifted south.  
Across the Yellowstone, lean-ribbed with drouth,  
The living rivers bellowed, morn to morn.  
The Powder and the Rosebud and the Horn  
Flowed backward freshets, roaring to their heads.  
Now up across the Cheyenne watersheds  
The manless cattle wrangled day and night.  
Along the Niobrara and the White  
Uncounted thirsts were slaked. The peace that broods  
Aloof among the sandhill solitudes  
Fled from the bawling bulls and lowing cows.  
Along the triple Loup they paused to browse  
And left the lush sloughs bare. Along the Platte  
The troubled myriads pawed the sandy flat  
And snorted at the evil men had done.  
For there, from morning sun to evening sun,  
A strange trail cleft the ancient bison world.  
And many-footed monsters whirred and whirled  
Upon it; many-eyed they blinked, and screamed;  
Tempestuous with speed, the long mane streamed  
Behind them; and the breath of them was loud—  
A rainless cloud with lightning in the cloud  
And alien thunder.

Thus the driving breed,  
The bold earth-takers, toiled to make the deed  
Audacious as the dream. One season saw  
The steel trail crawl away from Omaha  
As far as ox-rigs waddled in a day—  
An inchworm bound for San Francisco Bay!  
The next beheld a brawling, sweating host  
Of men and mules build on to Kearney Post

While spring greens mellowed into winter browns,  
And prairie dogs were giving up their towns  
To roaring cities. Where the Platte divides,  
The metal serpent sped, with league-long strides,  
Between two winters. North Platte City sprang  
From sage brush where the prairie sirens sang  
Of magic bargains in the marts of lust;  
A younger Julesburg sprouted from the dust  
To howl a season at the panting trains;  
Cheyenne, begotten of the ravished plains,  
All-hailed the planet as the steel clanged by.  
And now in frosty vacancies of sky  
The rail-head waited spring on Sherman Hill,  
And, brooding further prodigies of will,  
Blinked off at China.

So the man-stream flowed  
Full flood beyond the Powder River road—  
A cow path, hardly worth the fighting for.  
Then let grass grow upon the trails of war,  
Bad hearts be good and all suspicion cease!  
Beside the Laramie the pipe of peace  
Awaited; let the chieftains come and smoke!

’Twas summer when the Great White Father spoke.  
A thousand miles of dying summer heard;  
And nights were frosty when the crane-winged word  
Found Red Cloud on the Powder loath to yield.  
The crop from that rich seeding of the field  
Along the Piney flourished greenly still.  
The wail of many women on a hill  
Was louder than the word. And once again  
He saw that blizzard of his fighting men  
Avail as snow against the August heat.  
“Go tell them I am making winter meat;  
No time for talk,” he said; and that was all.

The Northwind snuffed the torches of the fall,  
And drearily the frozen moons dragged past.  
Then when the pasque-flower dared to bloom at last  
And resurrected waters hailed the geese,  
It happened that the flying word of peace

Came north again. The music that it made  
Was sweet to Spotted Tail, and Man Afraid  
Gave ear, bewitched. One Horn and Little Chief  
Believed; and Two Bears ventured on belief,  
And others who were powers in the land.  
For here was something plain to understand:  
As long as grass should grow and water flow,  
Between Missouri River and the snow  
That never melts upon the Big Horn heights,  
The country would be closed to all the Whites.  
So ran the song that lured the mighty south.  
It left a bitter taste in Red Cloud's mouth,  
No music in his ears. "Go back and say  
That they can take their soldier-towns away  
From Piney Fork and Crazy Woman's Creek  
And Greasy Grass. Then maybe I will speak.  
Great Spirit gave me all this country here.  
They have no land to give."

The hills went sere  
Along the Powder; and the summer grew.  
June knew not what the white men meant to do;  
Nor did July. The end of August came.  
Bullberries quickened into jets of flame  
Where smoky bushes smouldered by the creeks.  
The nights were like a watching mother, yet  
A chill as of incipient regret  
Foretold the winter when the twilight fell.  
'Twas then a story wonderful to tell  
Went forth at last. In every wind it blew  
Till all the far-flung bison hunters knew;  
And Red Cloud's name and glory filled the tale.  
The soldier-towns along the hated trail  
Were smoke, and all the wagons and the men  
Were dust blown south! Old times had come again.  
Unscared, the fatted elk and deer would roam  
Their pastures now, the bison know their home  
And flourish there forever unafraid.  
So when the victor's winter-meat was made  
And all his lodges ready for the cold,  
He listened to the word, now twelve moons old,  
Rode south and made his sign and had his will.

Meanwhile the road along the Smoky Hill  
Was troubled. Hunters, drifting with the herd  
The fall before, had scattered wide the word  
Of Red Cloud's victory. "Look north," they said;  
"The white men made a road there. It is red  
With their own blood, and now they whine for peace!"  
The brave tale travelled southward with the geese,  
Nor dwindled on the way, nor lacked applause.  
Comanches, South Cheyennes and Kiowas,  
Apaches and the South Arapahoes  
Were glad to hear. Satanta, Roman Nose,  
Black Kettle, Little Raven heard—and thought.  
Around their winter fires the warriors fought  
Those far-famed battles of the North again.  
Their hearts grew strong. "We, too," they said, "are men;  
And what men did up yonder, we can do.  
Make red the road along the Smoky too,  
And grass shall cover it!"

So when the spring  
Was fetlock-deep, wild news ran shuddering  
Through Kansas: women captured, homes ablaze,  
Men slaughtered in the country north of Hays  
And Harker! Terror stalking Denver way!  
Trains burned along the road to Santa Fe,  
The drivers scalped and given to the flames!  
All summer, Panic babbled demon names.  
No gloom but harbored Roman Nose, the Bat.  
Satanta, like an omnipresent cat,  
Moused every heart. Out yonder, over there,  
Black Kettle, Turkey Leg were everywhere.  
And Little Raven was the night owl's croon,  
The watch-dogs's bark. The setting of the moon  
Was Little Rock; the dew before the dawn  
A sweat of horror!

All that summer, drawn  
By vague reports and captive women's wails,  
The cavalry pursued dissolving trails—  
And found the hotwind. Loath to risk a fight,  
Fleas in the day and tigers in the night,

The wild bands struck and fled to strike anew  
And drop the curtain of the empty blue  
Behind them, passing like the wrath of God.

The failing year had lit the golden-rod  
Against the tingling nights, now well begun;  
The sunflowers strove to hoard the paling sun  
For winter cheer; and leagues of prairie glowed  
With summer's dying flare, when fifty rode  
From Wallace northward, trailing Roman Nose,  
The mad Cheyenne. A motley band were those—  
Scouts, hunters, captains, colonels, brigadiers;  
Wild lads who found adventure in arrears,  
And men of beard whom Danger's lure made young—  
The drift and wreckage of the great war, flung  
Along the brawling border. Two and two,  
The victor and the vanquished, gray and blue,  
Rode out across the Kansas plains together,  
Hearts, singing to the croon of saddle leather  
And jingling spurs. The buffalo, at graze  
Like dairy cattle, hardly deigned to raise  
Their shaggy heads and watch the horsemen pass.  
Like bursting case-shot, clumps of blue-joint grass  
Exploded round them, hurtling grouse and quail  
And plover. Wild hens drummed along the trail  
At twilight; and the antelope and deer,  
Moved more by curiosity than fear,  
Went trotting off to pause and gaze their fill.  
Past Short Nose and the Beaver, jogging still,  
They followed hot upon a trail that shrank  
At every tangent draw. Their horses drank  
The autumn-lean Republican and crossed;  
And there at last the swindled trail was lost  
Where sandhills smoked against a windy sky.

Perplexed and grumbling, disinclined to try  
The upper reaches of the stream, they pressed  
Behind Forsyth, their leader, pricking west  
With Beecher there beside him in the van.  
They might have disobeyed a lesser man;  
For what availed another wild goose chase,  
Foredoomed to end some God-forsaken place

With twilight dying on the prairie rim?  
But Fame had blown a trumpet over him;  
And men recalled that Shenandoah ride  
With Sheridan, the stemming of the tide  
Of rabble armies wrecked at Cedar Creek,  
When thirty thousand hearts, no longer weak,  
Were made one victor's heart.

And so the band  
Pushed westward up the lonely river land  
Four saddle days from Wallace. Then at last  
They came to where another band had passed  
With shoeless ponies, following the sun.  
Some miles the new trail ran as lean creeks run  
In droughty weather; then began to grow.  
Here other hoofs had swelled it, there, travaux;  
And more and more the circumjacent plains  
Had fed the trail, as when torrential rains  
Make prodigal the gullies and the sloughs,  
And prairie streams, late shrunken to an ooze,  
Appal stout swimmers. Scarcity of game  
(But yesterday both plentiful and tame)  
And recent pony-droppings told a tale  
Of close pursuit. All day they kept the trail  
And slept on it in their boots that night  
And saddled when the first gray wash of light  
Was on the hill tops. Past the North Fork's mouth  
It led, and, crossing over to the south,  
Struck up the valley of the Rickaree—  
So broad by now that twenty, knee to knee,  
Might ride thereon, nor would a single calk  
Bite living sod.

Proceeding at a walk,  
The troopers followed, awed by what they dared.  
It seemed the low hills stood aloof, nor cared,  
Disowning them; that all the gullies mocked  
The jingling gear of Folly where it walked  
The road to Folly's end. The low day changed  
To evening. Did the prairie stare estranged,  
The knowing sun make haste to be away?  
They saw the fingers of the failing day

Grow longer, groping for the homeward trail.  
They saw the sun put on a bloody veil  
And disappear. A flock of crows hurrahed.

Dismounting in the eerie valley, awed  
With purple twilight and the evening star,  
They camped beside the stream. A gravel bar  
Here split the shank-deep Rickaree in two  
And made a little island. Tall grass grew  
Among its scattered alders, and there stood  
A solitary sapling cottonwood  
Within the lower angle of the sand.

No jesting cheered the saddle-weary band  
That night; no fires were kindled to invoke  
Tales grim with cannon flare and battle smoke  
Remembered, and the glint of slant steel rolled  
Up roaring steeps. They ate short rations cold  
And thought about tomorrow and were dumb.

A hint of morning had begun to come;  
So faint as yet that half the stars at least  
Discredited the gossip of the east.  
The grazing horses, blowing at the frost,  
Were shadows, and the ghostly sentries tossed  
Their arms about them, drowsy in the chill.

Was something moving yonder on the hill  
To westward? It was there—it wasn't there.  
Perhaps some wolfish reveller, aware  
Of dawn, was making home. 'Twas there again!  
And now the bubble world of snoring men  
Was shattered, and a dizzy wind, that hurled  
Among the swooning ruins of the world  
Disintegrating dreams, became a shout:  
"Turn out! Turn out! The Indians! Turn out!"  
Hearts pounding with the momentary funk  
Of cold blood spurred to frenzy, reeling drunk  
With sleep, men stumbled up and saw the hill  
Where shadows of a dream were blowing still—  
No—mounted men were howling down the slopes!  
The horses, straining at their picket ropes,

Reared snorting. Barking carbines flashed and gloomed,  
Smearing the giddy picture. War drums boomed  
And shaken rawhide crackled through the din.  
A horse that trailed a bounding picket pin  
Made off in terror. Others broke and fled.  
Then suddenly the silence of the dead  
Had fallen, and the slope in front was bare  
And morning had become a startled stare  
Across the empty prairie, white with frost.

Five horses and a pair of pack mules lost!  
That left five donkeys for the packs. Men poked  
Sly banter at the mountless ones, invoked  
The "infantry" to back them, while they threw  
The saddles on and, boot to belly, drew  
Groan-fetching cinches tight.

A scarlet streak

Was growing in the east. Amid the reek  
Of cowchip fires that sizzled with the damp  
The smell of coffee spread about the camp  
A mood of peace. But 'twas a lying mood;  
For suddenly the morning solitude  
Was solitude no longer. "Look!" one cried.  
The resurrection dawn, as prophesied,  
Lacked nothing but the trump to be fulfilled!  
They wriggled from the valley grass! They spilled  
Across the sky rim! North and south and west  
Increasing hundreds, men and ponies, pressed  
Against the few.

'Twas certain death to flee.

The way left open down the Rickaree  
To where the valley narrowed to a gap  
Was plainly but the baiting of a trap.  
Who rode that way would not be riding far.  
"Keep cool now, men! Cross over to the bar!"  
The colonel shouted. Down they went pell-mell,  
Churning the creek. A heaven-filling yell  
Assailed them. Was it triumph? Was it rage?  
Some few wild minutes lengthened to an age  
While fumbling fingers stripped the horses' backs  
And tied the horses. Crouched behind the packs

And saddles now, they fell with clawing hands  
To digging out and heaping up the sands  
Around their bodies. Shots began to fall—  
The first few spatters of a thunder squall—  
And still the Colonel strolled about the field,  
Encouraging the men. A pack mule squealed  
And floundered. "Down!" men shouted. "Take it cool,"  
The Colonel answered; "we can eat a mule  
When this day's work is over. Wait the word,  
Then see that every cartridge wings a bird.  
Don't shoot too fast."

The dizzy prairie spun  
With painted ponies, weaving on the run  
A many colored noose. So dances Death,  
Bedizened like a harlot, when the breath  
Of Autumn flutes among the shedding boughs  
And scarlets caper and the golds carouse  
And bronzes trip it and the late green leaps.  
And then, as when the howling winter heaps  
The strippings of the hickory and oak  
And hurls them in a haze of blizzard smoke  
Along an open draw, the warriors formed  
To eastward down the Rickaree, and stormed  
Against the isle, their solid front astride  
The shallow water.

"Wait!" the Colonel cried;  
"Keep cool now!"—Would he never say the word?  
They heard the falling horses shriek; they heard  
The smack of smitten flesh, the whispering rush  
Of arrows, bullets whipping through the brush  
And flicked sand *phutting*; saw the rolling eyes  
Of war-mad ponies, crooked battle cries  
Lost in the uproar, faces in a blast  
Of color, color, and the whirlwind last  
Of all dear things forever.

"Now!"

The fear,  
The fleet, sick dream of friendly things and dear  
Dissolved in thunder; and between two breaths  
Men sensed the sudden splendor that is Death's,

The wild clairvoyant wonder. Shadows screamed  
Before the kicking Spencers, split and streamed  
About the island in a flame-rent shroud.  
And momentarily, with hoofs that beat the cloud,  
Winged with the mad momentum of the charge,  
A war horse loomed unnaturally large  
Above the burning ring of rifles there,  
Lit, sprawling, in the midst and took the air  
And vanished. And the storming hoofs roared by.  
And suddenly the sun, a handbreadth high,  
Was peering through the clinging battle-blur.

Along the stream, wherever bushes were  
Or clumps of bluejoint, lurking rifles played  
Upon the isle—a point-blank enfilade,  
Horse-slaughtering and terrible to stand;  
And southward there along the rising land  
And northward where the valley was a plain,  
The horsemen galloped, and a pelting rain  
Of arrows fell.

Now someone, lying near  
Forsyth, was yelling in his neighbor's ear  
"They've finished Sandy!" For a giant whip,  
It seemed, laid hot along the Colonel's hip  
A lash of torture, and his face went gray  
And pinched. And voices boomed above the fray,  
"Is Sandy dead?" So, rising on a knee  
That anyone who feared for him might see,  
He shouted: "Never mind—it's nothing bad!"  
And noting how the wild face of a lad  
Yearned up at him—the youngest face of all,  
With cheeks like Rambeau apples in the fall,  
Eyes old as terror—"Son, you're doing well!"  
He cried and smiled; and that one lived to tell  
The glory of it in the after days.

Now presently the Colonel strove to raise  
The tortured hip to ease it, when a stroke  
As of a dull ax bit a shin that broke  
Beneath his weight. Dragged backward in a pit,  
He sat awhile against the wall of it  
And strove to check the whirling of the land.

Then, noticing how some of the command  
Pumped lead too fast and threw their shells away,  
He set them to crawl to where they lay  
And tell them. Something whisked away his hat,  
And for a green-sick minute after that  
The sky rained stars. Then vast ear-hollows rang  
With brazen noises, and a sullen pang  
Was like a fire that smouldered in his skull.  
He gazed about him groggily. A lull  
Had fallen on the battle, and he saw  
How pairs of horsemen galloped down the draw,  
Recovering the wounded and the dead.  
The snipers on the river banks had fled  
To safer berths; but mounted hundreds still  
Swarmed yonder on the flat and on the hill,  
And long range arrows fell among the men.  
The island had become a slaughter pen.  
Of all the mules and horses, one alone  
Still stood. He wobbled with a gurgling moan,  
Legs wide, his drooping muzzle dripping blood;  
And some still wallowed in a scarlet mud  
And strove to rise, with threshing feet aloft.  
But most lay still, as when the spring is soft  
And work-teams share the idleness of cows  
On Sunday, and a gluttoned horse may drowse,  
Loose-necked, forgetting how the plowshare drags.  
Bill Wilson yonder lay like bundled rags,  
And so did Chalmers. Farley over there,  
With one arm limp, was taking special care  
To make the other do; it did, no doubt.  
And Morton yonder with an eye shot out  
Was firing slowly, but his gun barrel shook.  
And Mooers, the surgeon, with a sightless look  
Of mingled expectation and surprise,  
Had got a bullet just above the eyes;  
But Death was busy and neglected him.

Now all the while, beneath the low hill rim  
To southward, where a sunning slope arose  
To look upon the slaughter, Roman Nose  
Was sitting, naked of his battle-gear.  
In vain his chestnut stallion, tethered near,

Had sniffed the battle, whinnying to go  
Where horses cried to horses there below,  
And men to men. By now a puzzled word  
Ran round the field, and baffled warriors heard,  
And out of bloody mouths the dying spat  
The question: "Where is Roman Nose, the Bat?  
While other men are dying, where is he?"  
So certain of the mighty rode to see,  
And found him yonder sitting in the sun.  
They squatted round him silently. And one  
Got courage for a voice at length, and said:  
"Your people there are dying, and the dead  
Are many." But the Harrier of Men  
Kept silence. And the bold one, speaking then  
To those about him, said: "You see today  
The one whom all the warriors would obey,  
Whatever he might wish. His heart is faint.  
He has not even found the strength to paint  
His face, you see!" The Flame of Many Roofs  
Still smouldered there. The Midnight Wind of Hoofs  
Kept mute. "Our brothers, the Arapahoes,"  
Another said, "will tell of Roman Nose;  
Their squaws will scorn him; and the Sioux will say  
'He was not like the men we were that day  
When all the soldiers died by Peno ford.'"

They saw him wince, as though the words had gored  
His vitals. Then he spoke. His voice was low.  
"My medicine is broken. Long ago  
One made a bonnet for a mighty man,  
My father's father; and the good gift ran  
From sire to son, and we were men of might.  
For he who wore the bonnet in a fight  
Could look on Death, and Death would fear him much,  
So long as he should let no metal touch  
The food he ate. But I have been a fool.  
A woman lifted with an iron tool  
The bread I ate this morning. What you say  
Is good to hear."

He cast his robe away,  
Got up and took the bonnet from its case  
And donned it; put the death-paint on his face

And mounted, saying "Now I go to die!"  
Thereat he lifted up a bull-lunged cry  
That clamored far among the hills around;  
And dying men took courage at the sound  
And muttered "He is coming."

Now it fell  
That those upon the island heard a yell  
And looked about to see from whence it grew.  
They saw a war-horse hurtled from the blue,  
A big-boned chestnut, clean and long of limb,  
That did not dwarf the warrior striding him,  
So big the man was. Naked as the day  
The neighbors sought his mother's lodge to say  
'This child shall be a trouble to his foes'  
(Save for a gorgeous bonnet), Roman Nose  
Came singing on the run. And as he came  
Mad hundreds hailed him, booming like a flame  
That rages over slough grass, pony tall.  
They formed behind him in a solid wall  
And halted at a lifting of his hand.  
The troopers heard him bellow some command.  
They saw him wheel and wave his rifle high;  
And distant hills were peopled with the cry  
He flung at Death, that mighty men of old  
Long dead, might hear the coming of the bold  
And know the land still nursed the ancient breed  
Then, followed by a thundering stampede,  
He charged the island where the rifles brawled.  
And some who galloped nearest him recalled  
In after days, what some may choose to doubt,  
How suddenly the hubbuboo went out  
In silence, and a wild white brilliance broke  
About him, and the cloud of battle smoke  
Was thronged with faces not of living men.  
Then terribly the battle roared again.  
And those who tell it saw him reel and sag  
Against the stallion, like an empty bag,  
Then slip beneath the mill of pony hoofs.

So Roman Nose, the Flame of Many Roofs,  
Flared out. And round the island swept the foe—

Wrath-howling breakers with an undertow  
Of pain that wailed and murmuring dismay.

Now Beecher, with the limp he got that day  
At Gettysburg, rose feebly from his place,  
Unearthly moon-dawn breaking on his face,  
And staggered over to the Colonel's pit.  
Half crawling and half falling into it,  
"I think I have a fatal wound," he said:  
And from his mouth the hard words bubbled red  
In witness of the sort of hurt he had.  
"No, Beecher, no! It cannot be so bad!"  
The other begged, though certain of the end;  
For even then the features of the friend  
Were getting queer. "Yes, Sandy, yes—goodnight,"  
The stricken muttered. Whereupon the fight  
No longer roared for him; but one who grieved  
And fought thereby could hear the rent chest heaved  
With struggling breath that couldn't leave the man.  
And by and by the whirling host began  
To scatter, most withdrawing out of range.  
Astonished at the suddenness of change  
From dawn to noon, the troopers saw the sun.

To eastward yonder women had begun  
To glean the fallen, wailing as they piled  
The broken loves of mother, maid and child  
On pony-drags; remembering their wont  
Of heaping thus the harvest of the hunt  
To fill the kettles these had sat around.

Forsyth now strove to view the battleground,  
But could not for the tortured hip and limb;  
And so they passed a blanket under him  
And four men heaved the corners; then he saw.  
"Well, Grover, have they other cards to draw,  
Or have they played the pack?" he asked a scout.  
And that one took a plug of chewing out  
And gnawed awhile, then spat and said: "Dunno;  
I've fit with Injuns thirty year or so  
And never see the like of this till now.  
We made a lot of good ones anyhow,  
Whatever else—."

Just then it came to pass  
Some rifles, hidden yonder in the grass,  
Took up the sentence with a snarling rip  
That made men duck. One let his corner slip.  
The Colonel tumbled, and the splintered shin  
Went crooked, and the bone broke through the skin;  
But what he said his angel didn't write.

'Twas plain the foe had wearied of the fight,  
Though scores of wary warriors kept the field  
And circled, watching for a head revealed  
Above the slaughtered horses. Afternoon  
Waned slowly, and a wind began to croon—  
Like memory. The sapling cottonwood  
Responded with a voice of widowhood.  
The melancholy heavens wove a pall.  
Night hid the valley. Rain began to fall.

How good is rain when from a sunlit scarp  
Of heaven falls a silver titan's harp  
For winds to play on, and the new green swirls  
Beneath the dancing feet of April girls,  
And thunder-claps applaud the meadow lark!  
How dear to be remembered—rainy dark  
When Youth and Wonder snuggle safe abed  
And hear creation bustling overhead  
With fitful hushes when the eave *drip-drops*  
And everything about the whole house stops  
To hear what now the buds and grass may think!

Night swept the island with a brush of ink.  
They heard the endless drizzle sigh and pass  
And whisper to the bushes and the grass,  
*Sh—sh*—for men were dying in the rain;  
And there was that low singing that is pain,  
And curses muttered lest a stout heart break.

As one who lies with fever half awake  
And sets the vague real shepherding a drove  
Of errant dreams, the broken Colonel strove  
For order in the nightmare. Willing hands  
With knife and plate fell digging in the sands  
And throwing out a deep surrounding trench.

Graves, yawning briefly in the inky drench,  
Were satisfied with something no one saw.  
Carved horse meat passed around for wolfing raw  
And much was cached to save it from the sun.  
Now when the work about the camp was done  
And all the wounds had got rude handed care,  
The Colonel called the men about him there  
And spoke of Wallace eighty miles away.  
Who started yonder might not see the day;  
Yet two must dare that peril with the tale  
Of urgent need; and if the two should fail,  
God help the rest!

It seemed that everyone  
Who had an arm left fit to raise a gun  
And legs for swinging leather begged to go.  
But all agreed with old Pierre Trudeau,  
The grizzled trapper, when he 'lowed he knowed  
The prairie like a farmer did a road,  
And many was the Injun he had fooled.  
And Stillwell's youth and daring overruled  
The others. Big he was and fleet of limb  
And for his laughing pluck men honored him,  
Despite that weedy age when boys begin  
To get a little conscious of the chin  
And jokers dub them "Whiskers" for the lack.  
These two were swallowed in the sippy black  
And wearily the sodden night dragged by.

At last the chill rain ceased. A dirty sky  
Leaked morning. Culver, Farley, Day and Smith  
Had found a comrade to adventure with  
And come upon the country that is kind.  
But Mooers was slow in making up his mind  
To venture, though with any breath he might.  
Stark to the drab indecency of light,  
The tumbled heaps, that once were horses, lay  
With naked ribs and haunches lopped away—  
Good friends at need with all their fleetness gone.  
Like wolves that smell a feast the foe came on,  
A skulking pack. They met a gust of lead  
That flung them with their wounded and their dead

Back to the spying summits of the hills,  
Content to let the enemy that kills  
Without a wound complete the task begun.

Dawn cleared the sky, and all day long the sun  
Shone hotly through a lens of amethyst—  
Like some incorrigible optimist  
Who overworks the sympathetic role.  
All day the troopers sweltered in the bowl  
Of sippy sand, and wondered if the two  
Were dead by now; or had they gotten through?  
And if they hadn't—What about the meat?  
Another day or two of steaming heat  
Would fix it for the buzzards and the crows;  
And there'd be choicer banqueting for those  
If no one came.

So when a western hill  
Burned red and blackened, and the stars came chill,  
Two others started crawling down the flat  
For Wallace; and for long hours after that  
Men listened, listened, listened for a cry,  
But heard no sound. And just before the sky  
Began to pale, the two stole back unhurt.  
The dark was full of shadow men, alert  
To block the way wherever one might go.

Alas, what chance for Stillwell and Trudeau?  
That day the dozen wounded bore their plight  
Less cheerfully than when the rainy night  
Had held so great a promise. All day long,  
As one who hums a half forgotten song  
By poignant bits, the dying surgeon moaned;  
But when the west was getting sober-toned,  
He choked a little and forgot the tune.  
And men were silent, wondering how soon  
They'd be like that.

Now when the tipping Wain,  
Above the Star, poured slumber on the plain,  
Jack Donovan and Pliley disappeared  
Down river where the starry haze made weird

The narrow gulch. They seemed as good as dead;  
And all next day the parting words they said,  
“We won’t be coming back,” were taken wrong.  
The fourth sun since the battle lingered long.  
Putrescent horseflesh now befouled the air.  
Some tried to think they liked the prickly pear.  
Some tightened up their belts a hole or so.  
And certain of the wounded babbled low  
Of places other than the noisome pits,  
Because the fever sped their straying wits  
Like homing bumblebees that know the hive.  
That day the Colonel found his leg alive  
With life that wasn’t his.

The fifth sun crept;

The evening dawdled; morning overslept.  
It seemed the dark would never go away;  
The kiotes filled it with a roundelay  
Of toothsome horses smelling to the sky.

But somehow morning happened by and by.  
All day the Colonel scanned the prairie rims  
And found it hard to keep away the whims  
That dogged him; often, wide awake, he dreamed.  
The more he thought of it, the more it seemed  
That all should die of hunger wasn’t fair;  
And so he called the sound men round him there  
And spoke of Wallace and the chance they stood  
To make their way to safety, if they would.  
As for himself and other cripples—well,  
They’d take a chance, and if the worst befell,  
Were soldiers.

There was silence for a space  
While each man slyly sought his neighbor’s face  
To see what better thing a hope might kill.  
Then there was one who growled: “The hell we will!  
We’ve fought together and we’ll die so too!”  
One might have thought relief had come in view  
To hear the shout that rose.

The slow sun sank.

The empty prairie gloomed. The horses stank.  
The kiotes sang. The starry dark was cold.

That night the prowling wolves grew over bold  
And one was cooking when the sun came up.  
It gave the sick a little broth to sup;  
And for the rest, they joked and made it do.  
And all day long the cruising buzzards flew  
Above the island, eager to descend;  
While, raucously prophetic of the end,  
The crows wheeled round it hungrily to pry;  
And mounted warriors loomed against the sky  
To peer and vanish. Darkness fell at last;  
But when the daylight came and when it passed  
The Colonel scarcely knew, for things got mixed;  
The moment was forever, strangely fixed,  
And never in a moment. Still he kept  
One certain purpose, even when he slept,  
To cheer the men by seeming undismayed.  
But when the eighth dawn came, he grew afraid  
Of his own weakness. Stubbornly he sat,  
His tortured face half hidden by his hat,  
And feigned to read a novel one had found  
Among the baggage. But the print went round  
And wouldn't talk however it was turned.

At last the morning of the ninth day burned.  
Again he strove to regiment the herds  
Of dancing letters into marching words,  
When suddenly the whole command went mad.  
They yelled; they danced the way the letters had;  
They tossed their hats.

Then suddenly he knew  
'Twas cavalry that made the hillside blue—  
The cavalry from Wallace!

*The Song of the Indian Wars, 1925*

# Songs of the Broad Prairie

## 1. As I Walked Out In the Streets of Laredo

As I walked out in the streets of Laredo,  
As I walked out in Laredo one day,  
I spied a poor cowboy wrapped up in white linen,  
Wrapped up in white linen and cold as the clay.

“I see by your outfit that you are a cowboy,”  
These words he did say as I boldly stepped by.  
“Come sit down beside me and hear my sad story;  
I was shot in the breast and I know I must die.

“Let sixteen gamblers come handle my coffin,  
Let sixteen cowboys come sing me a song,  
Take me to the graveyard and lay the sod o’er me,  
For I’m a poor cowboy and I know I’ve done wrong.

“It was once in the saddle I used to go dashing,  
It was once in the saddle I used to go gay.  
’Twas first to drinking and then to card playing,  
Got shot in the breast, I am dying today.

“Get six jolly cowboys to carry my coffin,  
Get six pretty girls to carry my pall;  
Put bunches of roses all over my coffin,  
Put roses to deaden the clods as they fall.

“O beat the drum slowly and play the fife lowly  
And play the dead march as you carry me along,  
Take me to the green valley and lay the sod o’er me,  
For I’m a young cowboy and I know I’ve done wrong.”

We beat the drum slowly and played the fife lowly,  
And bitterly wept as we bore him along;  
For we all loved our comrade, so brave, young, and  
handsome,  
We all loved our comrade although he’d done wrong.

*The American Songbag, 1927*

## 2. When The Work's All Done This Fall

A group of jolly cowboys, discussing plans at ease,  
Says one, "I'll tell you something, boys, if you will listen, please.  
I am an old cow-puncher and hyer I'm dressed in rags,  
I used to be a tough one and go on great big jags.  
But I have got a home, boys, a good one, you all know,  
Although I have not seen it since long, long ago.  
I'm going back to Dixie once more to see them all,  
Yes, I'm going to see my mother when the work's all done this fall.

"After the round-up's over and after the shipping's done,  
I am going right straight home, boys, ere all my money is gone.  
I have changed my ways, boys, no more will I fall;  
And I am going home, boys, when the work's all done this fall.  
When I left home, boys, my mother for me cried,  
Begged me not to go, boys, for me she would have died;  
My mother's heart is breaking, breaking for me, that's all,  
And with God's help I'll see her when the work's all done this fall."

That very night this cowboy went out to stand his guard;  
The night was dark and cloudy and storming very hard;  
The cattle they got frightened and rushed in wild stampede,  
The cowboy tried to head them, riding at full speed.  
While riding in the darkness so loudly did he shout,  
Trying his best to head them and turn the herd about,  
His saddle horse did stumble and on him did fall,  
The poor boy won't see his mother when the work's all done this fall.

His body was so mangled the boys all thought him dead,  
They picked him up so gently and laid him on a bed;  
He opened wide his blue eyes and looking all around  
He motioned to his comrades to sit near him on the ground.  
"Boys, send my mother my wages, the wages I have earned,  
For I am afraid, boys, my last steer I have turned.  
I'm going to a new range, I hyear my Master's call,  
And I'll not see my mother when the work's all done this fall."

"Bill, you may have my saddle; George, you may take my bed;  
Jack may have my pistol, after I am dead.  
Boys, think of me kindly when you look upon them all,  
The boy won't see his mother when the work's all done this fall."

Poor Charlie was buried at sunrise, no tombstone at his head,  
Nothing but a little board and this is what it said,  
“Charlie died at daybreak, he died from a fall,  
The boy won’t see his mother, when the work’s all done this fall.”

*The American Songbag, 1927*

### 3. Whoopee Ti Yi Yo, Git Along, Little Dogies

As I was a-walking one morning for pleasure,  
I saw a cowpuncher come riding alone.  
His hat was throwed back and his spurs was a-jingling,  
And as he approached he was singing this song:

Refrain:

Whoopee, ti yi yo, git along, little dogies!  
It’s your misfortune and none of my own.  
Whoopee, ti yi yo, git along, little dogies,  
For you know Wyoming will be your new home!

Early in the spring we round up the dogies,  
Mark and brand and bob off their tails,  
Round up our horses, load up the chuck wagon,  
Then throw the dogies up on the trail:  
Whoopee, ti yi yo, git along, little dogies, etc.

It’s whooping and yelling and driving the dogies;  
O how I wish they would go on!  
It’s whooping and punching and go on little dogies,  
For you know Wyoming will be your new home:  
Whoopee, ti yi yo, git along, little dogies, etc.

When the night comes on we herd them on the bedground,  
These little dogies that roll on so slow;  
Roll up the herd and cut out the strays,  
And roll the little dogies that never rolled before:  
Whoopee, ti yi yo, git along, little dogies, etc.

Your mother she was raised way down in Texas,  
Where the jimson weed and sand burrs grow.  
Now we'll fill you up on prickly pear and cholla  
Till you are ready for the trail to Idaho:  
Whoopee, ti yi yo, git along, little dogies, etc.

Oh, you'll be soup for Uncle Sam's Injuns;  
It's "beef, heap beef," I hear them cry.  
Git along, git along, little dogies,  
You're going to be beef steers by and by.  
Whoopee, ti yi yo, git along, little dogies, etc.

*The American Songbag, 1927*

# *The Cattleman's Frontier, 1845-1867*

ERNEST STAPLES OSGOOD

In 1830, more than two hundred years after the first white man had made a clearing in the forest about him and in so doing had created that most significant of boundaries, the American frontier, the westernmost point in the area of continuous settlement was still less than halfway across the continent. According to the census of that year, the area containing more than two inhabitants to the square mile extended almost as far west as the western border of the young state of Missouri. Here, where the Missouri River coming down from the north bends sharply eastward on its way to the Mississippi, the frontier had paused, and twenty-five years were to elapse before the line of compact settlement advanced much beyond that point. To the rear, north and south, the wings of the frontier line bent far back toward the east and, as the center halted at the bend of the Missouri, the flanks, pivoting on that point, swung slowly westward during the succeeding decades, and new states were formed in the upper Mississippi Valley and in the lower South.

Although the western advance had paused in Missouri, the visitor to the town of Independence, established in 1831 at the apex of this salient, would have found nothing but movement and activity about him. Through its streets and on the river close by, there passed the whole pageantry of the frontier. Here, at the gateway to half a continent, an observer could, as the years went by, mark the emergence of the "Far West," as hunter and trail maker, trapper and trader, home seeker and gold seeker moved out along the western trails into those regions of which the average American was but dimly conscious and about which he knew next to nothing.

The river was a roadway of exploration. Up its lonely reaches had moved the keel boats of Lewis and Clark, a quarter of a century before the founding of the town. Seven years later, the Astorians, whose experiences were to be made familiar to the reading public by the pen of Washington Irving, passed by on their way to the mouth of the Columbia. Then on a day in the spring of 1819, the roving Indian gazed in wonder at a strange monster of smoke and noise moving upstream without any apparent effort on the part of those directing its course. Major Stephen Long and his party on

the steamboat *Western Engineer* were on their way to the mouth of the Platte River. From there, in the following spring, they began their journey overland to the heads of the Platte, the Arkansas, and the Red. On his return, Long confirmed the opinions of other travelers that the country beyond the Missouri could never be utilized by white men, but must ever remain the home of the wild tribes who roamed over those frightful and terrifying wastes. For a half-century thereafter the Great American Desert was a fixed idea in the minds of most Americans.

Beyond these "steppes of Tartary," far up in the mountains, the "brigades" of the fur companies and the lonely trapper were busy expanding the great fur trade, which reached its height during the thirties. From the remote north country, where the Missouri and its tributaries head deep in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, they came, their keel boats laden with great bales of peltry for the St. Louis market. Each spring, when the water was high, the inhabitants of Independence turned out to see the steamboat of the American Fur Company, bound for Fort Union, the company's post located at the mouth of the Yellowstone, a thousand miles upstream. As the stories of the "mountain men" circulated around the border settlements and as the journals of explorer and traveler found their way into print, the topography and general character of the mountain regions, hundreds of miles to the west, were known long before the intervening country that began at the outskirts of the Missouri towns was anything more than a name.

This region between the settlements and the mountains, the last area of continental United States to become familiar to the average American, went under the general name of the Indian country. Here was a country, stretching all the way from the Red River to the Canadian boundary, which seemed destined by a kind Providence to provide a permanent home for the Indian. Here he might live undisturbed, freed from the pressure of the westward-moving pioneer, who would never, it was believed at the time, settle in that semi-arid, treeless country where all efforts at agriculture must surely fail. In the western section, on the High Plains and in the mountains, the wild tribes might roam as of old, following the great herds of buffalo upon which their whole tribal existence was based. In the eastern section, close to the Missouri River, room could be provided for the more civilized or the weaker tribes of the eastern United States, who were impeding the advance of the north and south wings of the frontier.

All through the thirties the Federal Government was busy

negotiating treaties with these eastern tribes, treaties by which they surrendered their old tribal homes for reservations beyond the western border. When persuasion and solemn promises of undisturbed and perpetual possession failed, force was used, for the western Jacksonian democracy, then in the saddle in Washington, had little patience with humanitarians who demanded that the Indian problem be solved on the basis of abstract justice. Up the Missouri River on steamboats chartered by the government, or along the rough frontier roads of the southwest, the remnants of once powerful tribes moved under military guard to their new homes. Across the border, the new reservations formed an unbroken front from the Mexican boundary at the Red River to the northwestern corner of Missouri. North of Missouri, the tribes of the upper Mississippi were pushed back during the same period, thus clearing the way for the settlement of southern Wisconsin and eastern Iowa.

However permanent and satisfactory this solution of the Indian question might appear to the pioneer farmer and the eastern statesman, the visitor to Independence would soon discover that Indian isolation was the most temporary of expedients. While the treaties were still being negotiated, the wagons of the Santa Fé traders were cutting deeper and deeper the tracks that led out of the streets of Independence, over the sun-baked plains of the Cimarron and the Arkansas, across the Mexican border to the ancient Spanish city where Yankee trade goods could be sold at immense profit. This trade, which flourished during the thirties, quickened the life of the Missouri towns, increased the interest that the border was taking in the Southwest and, incidentally, contributed much to the knowledge of the country over which the trail ran.

Before the close of the thirties there were signs of a new movement among the crowds that thronged the streets of the Missouri settlements. In the remote Northwest, beyond the barrier of the Rockies, the American trapper was making contact with the Canadian fur trader in the valleys of the Columbia and its tributaries. Mountain men talked of Oregon, the richest fur country of all, of likely routes thither, and of the necessity for American effort in that region unless it were to become the exclusive domain of the Canadians. In 1832, several parties of fur traders and explorers were outfitting at Independence for the Columbia River. The trail that they took led across the trackless Indian country of the Platte at Grand Island, up that river and its tributary, the Sweetwater, until at last it topped the low divide that separates the waters of the

Missouri system from those of the Columbia and the Colorado. Here was South Pass, discovered ten years before by the fur trader, Ashley, a low, grassy divide over which wagons might be drawn with little difficulty. There were no wagon tracks in the year 1832 when Bonneville and Sublette and Wyeth went through, but behind them there was to follow a multitude beneath whose feet rose the dust of the greatest of all frontier roads, the Oregon Trail.

In the history of the westward movement, the missionary has seldom been far behind the explorer and the fur trader, sometimes, indeed, he has led them. In 1834 two Methodist missionaries had established themselves in the valley of the Willamette, a tributary of the Columbia, near Fort Vancouver, where Dr. John McLoughlin ruled benignly over his vassals, white and red, in the interests of the great Hudson's Bay Company. Two years later Dr. Marcus Whitman, sent out by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, began his work further up the Columbia in central Oregon. Eastward, over the mountains, in the valley of the Bitter Root, the Jesuits had established themselves by 1840 under the leadership of Father De Smet.

The fertility of the soil was of slight importance to the fur trader. The missionary, however, had a good eye for land, for those Indian converts who could be induced to settle down to farming in the neighborhood of the mission were likely to stay Christianized. In their reports the missionaries were as enthusiastic over the rich land of the Willamette as they were over the prospect of saving souls. Here was land that equaled, if it did not surpass, the best that the prairie region of Illinois could offer. As this news spread, farmers began to think and talk of Oregon and the way thither. By 1843 the movement of the homeseeker out over the Oregon Trail had begun, a movement that in a few years increased to thousands and built up a new American commonwealth on the shores of the Pacific. Long lines of wagons passed through the dusty streets of Independence, and in the crowd that swarmed around them, the talk was no longer of fur and Indian trade but of land, of crops, of climate, and of the fortunes in the fertile soil of Oregon awaiting those who would brave the long march and all its attendant dangers.

Two hundred miles upstream, where the Missouri is joined by the Platte, another group was gathering in the fall of 1846. In their winter quarters on the western edge of the new state of Iowa, the Mormons were laying their plans for the coming spring. They had despaired of finding a home in the States, for wherever

they had settled, their neighbors had coveted their land, envied their prosperity, and disapproved of their way of life. Somewhere beyond the plains and mountains lay the Promised Land. Before the close of the next year, they had found it in the valley of the Great Salt Lake.

Then in the next year came the news that was to set the whole frontier in motion. Eastward along the trail to the border settlements, across the country to the crowded cities of the seaboard and on beyond the seas sped the magic word that was to bring a whole world flocking westward—gold! The discovery of a few nuggets in a California millrace was destined to fill the harbor of the Golden Gate with a forest of masts, to make the Isthmus of Panama a highway for the nations, and to crowd the Oregon Trail with an army of adventurers, who would find no rest until the weary miles had been traversed and they stood at last in that fabulous land of gold by the blue waters of the Pacific.

When the emigrant bound for Oregon or California turned his back on the Missouri settlements and struck out along the westward trail, his condition was not unlike that of the traveler sailing out of an eastern seaport on a trans-atlantic journey. Beyond the narrow wagon track a vast waste stretched away on every side to the far horizon, its swells and hollows as lacking in identity as the crests and troughs of the Atlantic rollers. Herds of buffalo and great bands of antelope, seemingly as multitudinous as the fish of the sea, moved over the face of these great solitudes. It seemed unlikely that man would ever be more than a wayfarer in these wastes. Only the roving Indian, the occasional trapper, and the little garrisons at the trading posts strung out along the trail served to dispel such illusions. The myth of the American Desert, so long a part of the American's stock of ideas about his country, had its origin as much in the impression resulting from such solitary vastness as in any evidence of the sterility of the soil or the rigors of the climate. Men accustomed to the companionship of woods and streams, of green meadows and uplands, of familiar hills and limited horizons, found nothing hospitable in the leagues of brown grass, nothing familiar in the monotony of rolling plain or wind-scarred butte.

Into this great solitude rode the cattleman. From the ranches of Texas and New Mexico he pushed his way northward across the lands of the Indian nations to the railroad that had begun to bridge this waste. The desire for new pastures and markets sent him further and further north, until his herds met and mingled with

other herds drifting down out of the northern valleys. It was the range cattleman who broke the spell; who made these great areas his own; who, in his search for grass, crossed every divide, rode into every coulee, and swam every stream. The solitude of the desert passed, and men began to realize that this, our last frontier, was not a barrier between the river settlements and the mining communities in the mountains but an area valuable in itself, where men might live and prosper.

The cattle business of the High Plains began as a result of the necessities of the emigrants along the Oregon Trail, and the earliest herds were brought together to meet that demand. The westward trek of thousands to Oregon and California in the two decades before the Civil War stirred into new activity the far-western trading posts, which had languished following the boom period of the fur trade. The rather scattered, nebulous population of the fur country began to drift down into the trail when it became apparent that money could be made out of the western-bound pioneer, who was a ready customer up to the limits of his resources. In these unfamiliar wastes, where nature appeared so strange and formidable to his unaccustomed eyes, he was eager to accept assistance from any one more experienced than he. By the time he began his journey up the North Platte, his animals were footsore and weak and his stock of food was running low. It was a strong and well-equipped outfit indeed that was not anxious to bargain for such aid and comfort as those along the trail were able to furnish.

Nor were the traders who were finding favorable locations along the trail loath to gain all they could from these necessitous travelers. Flour, coffee, bacon, powder, and shot were always in demand. Sometimes the emigrant lacked these essentials because of ill-advised provisioning at the outset, sometimes he was the victim of wandering bands of Indians who held up trains and exacted tribute. Flour, brought down by packhorse from the Oregon settlements, sold for one hundred dollars a hundredweight on the trail.<sup>1</sup> As early as 1845 Fort Bridger had become one of the chief entrepôts of this trade. Hither the mountaineers had resorted for years to trade their season's supply of hides and Indian articles for flour, pork, spirits, powder, lead, blankets, butcherknives, hats, ready-made clothes, coffee, and sugar.<sup>2</sup> Such posts merely had to enlarge their stocks in these articles to meet the emigrant's demands.

<sup>1</sup> Joel Palmer, "Journal of Travels over the Rocky Mountains, 1845-46," *Early Western Travels* (Cleveland, 1906), edited by R. G. Thwaites, XXX, 86 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-75.

But the traders soon found ways of making money other than by selling these standard supplies of the posts. Three new economic activities sprang up along the trail, each of them the result of utilizing the local natural advantages and resources and each of them a part of the business of transportation rather than supply. These were the operation of bridges and ferries, the furnishing of forage, and the exchanging of fresh for worn-down work cattle.

It was not long after the western migration had begun before bridges or ferries were established at the more difficult stream crossings. At strategically located points on the North Platte, the Sweetwater, and the Green rivers, ferrymen were prepared to take the emigrant and his team across for a toll.<sup>1</sup> These ferries became natural trading points, and here road ranches, often the property of the ferryman, sprang up.

With every year of travel over the emigrant road, it became more and more difficult to find sufficient grazing ground for the animals. As a result, there developed a market for hay. Temporary posts, consisting of a tent and a corral set up along the trail to catch the season's trade, were soon converted into more substantial ranches. Their owners began to put up the wild hay that grew along the streams and were prepared to supply forage to the motive power of the emigrant trains at thirty-five cents to a dollar and a half a hundredweight. A small garden patch on the side might prove profitable, when potatoes brought five cents apiece during the emigrant season. Such establishments usually consisted of an adobe house, often a dwelling and store combined, a few stock corrals made out of the cottonwoods that bordered every stream, and a haystack.<sup>2</sup> These road ranches, the product of the emigrant trade, were the first ranches of the northern ranges.

The need of the travelers for fresh work stock and the profits to be made out of such a trade induced many of the traders to go into the cattle business. One fat and well-conditioned work steer might

<sup>1</sup> The toll bridge over the North Platte, twenty miles west of Fort Laramie, which cost \$5,000 to build, took in \$40,000 in tolls during the single season of 1853. A five-gallon keg of whiskey was sufficient to pay a toll charge of \$125.00 on a train of nineteen wagons crossing the Platte at this point. "Autobiography of William K. Sloan," *Annals of Wyoming* (Cheyenne) IV, 246, July, 1926.

<sup>2</sup> Diary kept by Silas L. Hopper, "Nebraska City to California, April-August, 1863," *Annals of Wyoming*, III, 117, Oct., 1925. Gen. Sherman on his trip west in 1866 wrote back to Rawlins that "these ranches consist usually of a store, a house, a corral, and a big pile of hay for sale . . . you are never out of sight of train or ranch." Sherman to Rawlins, Aug. 21, 1866, *House Ex. Doc. No. 23*, 39 Cong., Sess. 2, p. 5.

be exchanged for two worn down and foot-sore ones. Dairy cattle, driven along with the trains, appeared less valuable on the Sweet-water than they did in Missouri, and many a family cow, unused to the hardship that such a journey imposed, was destined never to reach the green valleys of the Willamette but was traded off for ten dollars or a little flour.<sup>1</sup>

The early herds of the northern ranges were the product of such trade. Captain Richard Grant, trading along the road from Fort Hall, had a herd of six hundred in 1856.<sup>2</sup> Horace Greeley, on his way to Salt Lake three years later, found this business thriving along Black's Fork and Ham's Fork of the Green River. Here he found "several old mountaineers, who have large herds of cattle which they are rapidly increasing by a lucrative traffic with the emigrants, who are compelled to exchange their tired, gaunt oxen and steers for fresh ones on almost any terms. R. D., whose tent we passed last evening, is said to have six or eight hundred head; and, knowing the country perfectly, finds no difficulty in keeping them through summer and winter by frequently shifting them from place to place over a circuit of thirty or forty miles. J. R., who has been here some twenty odd years, began with little or nothing and had quietly accumulated some fifty horses, three or four hundred head of neat cattle, three squaws, and any number of half-breed children. He is said to be worth \$75,000."<sup>3</sup> These were Wyoming's first cattlemen.

As the forage along the trail became scarce from constant cropping, the more enterprising herdsmen drove their cattle north into the sheltered valleys of the upper Missouri in what later became western Montana, their wintering places being the Beaverhead, the Stinking Water (later the Ruby), and the Deer Lodge valleys. The value of this region as a stock-raising country had been demonstrated by the Jesuit fathers at the St. Ignatius Mission, located on the Clark's Fork of the Columbia. Here under their tutelage, the Flatheads had settled down to a more or less civilized existence and by 1858 had developed so far in the arts of farming and animal husbandry that they were sowing three hundred acres to wheat and were herding

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes this loose stock amounted to a considerable band. The good price for beef at the California mines induced some herdsmen to essay the long drive with a beef herd. Greeley notes such a herd from southwestern Missouri. Horace Greeley, *Overland Journey* (New York, 1860), 72.

<sup>2</sup> Granville Stuart, *Forty Years on the Frontier* (Cleveland, 1925) II, 97.

<sup>3</sup> Greeley, 195. This entry was made while Greeley was at Fort Bridger. The J. R. referred to may have been J. B.—Jim Bridger.

on the adjacent hillsides and in the neighboring valleys over a thousand head of fine stock.<sup>1</sup>

Had it not been for the Mormon war of 1857-1858, the Jesuits and their Indian converts might have remained undisturbed for another decade. When, however, the elders of the Mormon church issued an edict in February, 1857, ordering the Gentiles within the Mormon territory to leave forthwith, the isolation of the mountain regions north of the trail was destroyed. During the years previous to 1857, many enterprising merchants from the Missouri river towns had brought out loads of goods and had set up in business in the Mormon settlements. This trade had proved enormously profitable and considerable sums had been invested in the business. The order to evacuate Mormon territory left these merchants with no alternative than that of immediately disposing of their stocks as best they could. Many of them traded off their remaining merchandise for the cattle of the Mormons at ruinous figures and hurried out of the territory before their enterprising customers could recover the purchase price by stampeding the herd. Some headed for California where the mining communities offered a safe market. Others drove northward to the posts along the trail.<sup>2</sup> Here traffic had stopped when the rumors of burned freight trains and massacred emigrants sped eastward. The traders, seeing their custom diminish and fearing the ravages of the Saints and their Indian allies, sought refuge in the mountains until the storm blew over. Into the valleys of western Montana straggled the herds of the traders and of those who had been expelled from Utah.

Neither the protection afforded by the army of General Albert Sidney Johnson sent out to quell the rebellion, nor the market for beef, which the presence of this force created, was sufficient to tempt the traders to come down out of the northern valleys. In December, 1857, a small detail from Johnson's forces was sent north to contract

<sup>1</sup> Report of Lieutenant B. F. Ficklin to Major F. J. Porter, April 15, 1858, in Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1859, *House Ex. Doc. No. 2*, 35 Cong., Sess. 2, Vol. II, pt. 2, p. 70. Major John Owen had in 1850 purchased the buildings of St. Mary's Mission on the Bitter Root River from the Jesuits. This mission had been established nine years before by Father de Smet. Owen established a trading post here that he called Fort Owen. When the early cattlemen entered the valley from the south, they found Owen cultivating a considerable plot of ground and pasturing stock that he had bought of the Catholic fathers. Paul C. Phillips, *The Journals and Letters of John Owen* (New York, 1927).

<sup>2</sup> Sloan, "Autobiography," *op. cit.*, 260-263. Sloan was engaged in this trade with the Mormons. He had a store at Proro and was driven out along with the other Gentiles in the Territory in 1857. He estimated the total Gentile population at about three hundred in Salt Lake and not more than fifty in the rest of the Territory.

for beef with these fugitive cattlemen. The report of the commander of this beef-buying expedition gives a good picture of the situation in the upper Missouri country, the cradle of the stock-growing industry of Montana.

After experiencing great difficulty in crossing the snow-choked divide that separated the headwaters of the Missouri from those of the Snake, the party got down into the upper Missouri country.

After getting on the head waters of the Missouri, the snow entirely disappeared. On the fourth, our rations were exhausted, but I was not uneasy, as I expected to arrive soon at the Beaver Head, a point on the Jefferson Fork of the Missouri, fifty miles above the Three Forks of the Missouri, and one hundred east of the Mormon settlement on Salmon River, a popular wintering ground of the mountaineers, on account of their stock.

To my surprise, on arriving at Beaver Head, I found all the evidences of the mountaineers having left recently, and hastily, and taken the trail in the direction of Flathead Valley. . . .

On the 10th, overtook the camp of Mr. Herriford, where I obtained a supply of beef, and learned from him that about December first they had heard of the burning of the supply trains by the Mormons, and of threats uttered by the Mormons at Salmon river fork, against the mountaineers at Beaver Head. Fearing for the safety of their stock, they had started for the Flathead valley, as a more distant and secure point.

At the Deer's Lodge, overtook another party of mountaineers, with whom I made a contract for the delivery of three hundred head of beef-cattle, by April 16th, at ten dollars per hundred [weight], also to bring down about one hundred head of horses. Afterwards proceeded down the Flathead valley, where I could have a contract for two hundred head of cattle, but their fear of the Mormons was so great that no price would induce them to undertake to deliver them here. Several were making preparations to move their stock to Fort Walla-Walla this spring, in order to be beyond the reach of the Mormons. . . .

I spent several days at St. Ignatius mission (situated on one of the branches of Clark's Fork of the Columbia, on forty-seventh parallel) established by the Catholics, for the benefit of the Flatheads, Pend d'Oreilles, and Hootenais [*sic*].

. . . Under the direction of the priests they are improving rapidly in agriculture. This year they will sow about three hundred bushels of wheat; they raise large quantities of vegetables, especially potatoes, cabbage, and beets.

Their horses are superior to all other Indian horses, in size and power of endurance. The tribe, about sixty lodges, owns about one thousand head of cattle.

As it was impossible to buy stock in Flathead valley, on conditions contemplated in my instructions, on March 3rd I started for Deer Lodge, expecting to start immediately on my arrival with what stock I had contracted for at that place.

The contractors refused to deliver their beef at this place [Fort Scott, Utah] but offered to deliver it there [Deer Lodge Valley] as they were afraid of being robbed by the Mormons on the road.

Buying a few animals, to replace those lost, started on March 12th to return, . . .

The new grass was beginning to grow finely before I started on Jefferson fork; contrary to my expectation and information I had received from the oldest mountaineers, found snow in the mountains, between Missouri and Snake rivers, from three to six feet deep for a distance of twelve miles. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

The Mormon danger was, however, only temporary, and in the following year the trade along the trail was as brisk as ever. The sojourn of the traders in the mountain valleys had given them much information of the grazing resources of the upper Missouri country and had established a practical route from the trail to that region. Later, when gold was discovered in western Montana, the trail over which the traders fled with their herds became the chief connection between the mining towns of Montana and the great central route of transcontinental travel.

In addition to these herds of the traders, which had had their origin in the trade along the emigrant trail, there were the train-cattle or “bull-teams” of the freighting companies, which supplied the army on the plains, brought out the Indian annuity goods, and furnished the mining camps in the mountains with the necessities of life and equipment for the mines.<sup>2</sup> These trains of thirty or more wagons to a unit, each wagon with its six yoke of oxen, creaked their way across the plains in an endless procession. Thousands of head of these work animals were wintered by their owners in favorable spots along the trail. In the winter of 1857-1858, the firm of Russell, Majors, and Wadell wintered fifteen thousand head on a range that extended southward from the trail for a distance of over two hundred miles.<sup>3</sup> This range was far enough east so that the Mormon danger was not felt.

<sup>1</sup> Ficklin Report, *op. cit.*, 69-70. See M. L. Wilson, “Early Montana Agriculture,” *Proceedings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association*, 1918, IX, 429-440; also Conrad Kohrs, “A Veteran’s Experience in the Western Cattle Trade,” *Breeder’s Gazette* (Chicago), Dec. 18, 1912, pp. 1328-29.

<sup>2</sup> Frederic L. Paxson, *History of the American Frontier*, 462.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture*, 1870, pp. 303-309.

The experience of the early cattlemen along the trail and in the mountains of western Montana had demonstrated the practicability of wintering stock on the northern ranges a full decade before the Texas longhorn put in his appearance. Any further expansion in this pioneer industry beyond the point already described had to wait on the development of new local markets.

The discovery of gold in the Rocky Mountains, coincident with the Mormon outbreak and the scattering of the herds into the mountain valleys, created just such a market. In the autumn of 1858 gold was discovered some two hundred miles south of the Oregon Trail on the upper waters of the South Platte. By the next spring, the plains were alive with the Pike's Peak gold rush. The old trail was crowded, and to the south other thousands of gold seekers were making new trails across the unfamiliar brown wastes to where rise the eastern escarpments of the Rockies. The oxen used for this new trek were turned out to graze on the plains at the foot of the mountains, while their owners hurried on up the canyons to the diggings. For the more thrifty, ranches were established where cattle could be boarded for a dollar and a half a month.<sup>1</sup>

Here was a local market, which must be supplied, and which, in the fever of the gold rush, was not inclined to haggle over the price. The winter of 1858-1859 saw twenty-five thousand people at the Colorado mines or on the road, and beef of any kind or quality was at a premium. "From that time to the present," commented the *Rocky Mountain News* in retrospect twelve years later, "the Denver market has been supplied exclusively the year around with beef from the neighboring plains."<sup>2</sup> Train cattle and the stock of the gold seekers were used to start the ranches that began to grow up along the South Platte. In 1861 Iliff, destined to become the first "cattle king" of the northern ranges, was supplying the Colorado mining towns with beef from a herd that ranged up and down the South Platte for a distance of seventy-five miles or more.<sup>3</sup>

In another region the stimulus of this new and insistent market was being felt. Close to the southern borders of Colorado Territory, small communities of Mexicans had settled along the upper Rio Grande and its tributaries. Here they developed a system of stock growing perfectly adapted to their physical environment, a system

<sup>1</sup> Greeley, *op. cit.*, 115.

<sup>2</sup> The *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), quoted in the *National Live Stock Journal* (Chicago), I, 71, Nov., 1870.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Henry Latham, *Trans-Missouri Stock Raising; the Pasture Lands of North America* (Omaha, 1871), 41.

that the cattle growers of the High Plains were never able to duplicate because of the inadaptability of eastern-made land laws. "They hold their lands," wrote one observer, "without title and in accordance with their own customs. The land along the streams, being the only land that can be cultivated, each man holds so many varas or yards front on the stream and extending back at right angles with the stream to the bluff or as far as water can be carried by ditches for irrigation. The rest of the land is open to all as pasture and worthless for any other purpose. By this system of survey, each man has an equal use of water and bottom land, whether he cultivates three varas or one hundred, and all would be willing to pay for the land cultivated if they could take it in the *shape* they now hold it. The survey and sale of this land in regular sections would probably drive out the present population, while it might fail to bring in an equally industrious one."<sup>1</sup>

Cattle from these ranches found a ready sale in the Colorado towns, and thus the first connection between the southern stock-growing areas and the northern ranges was established, a connection that was to grow in magnitude until it constituted one of the most distinctive features of the "cow country."

The "busted" gold seekers of the Pike's Peak rush had scattered by 1862. Some had limped back to the border settlements to form an outer crust of plains-wise folk along the Kansas and Nebraska frontier; some drifted into the freighting business on the trails or took to ranching along the Platte or on the upper reaches of the Arkansas; some followed the rumor of gold to the north and became denizens of the roaring mining camps of the Clearwater and Salmon rivers. To the east, across the Bitter Root Range, some of the herdsmen who had fled from the Mormon danger were finding pay dirt in the Deer Lodge Valley.<sup>2</sup> News of these strikes filtered into the camps to the west and south. In 1862 a wave of prospectors rolled through the western passes, and by 1865 Bannock, Virginia City, and Helena were all on the map.

The solitary prospector might live off the country. As he worked from one mountain gulch to another, the bands of elk, blacktail, and mountain sheep furnished him with his chief food staple. Groups of miners, for whom the season had not been successful, often wintered in some likely hunting country and not uncommonly got through the winter on a bill of fare of "meat straight."

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Surveyor-General of Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and Idaho in the *Annual Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office*, 1864, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> Stuart, I, 132-156.

Gathered in the mining camps by the thousand, however, they must be fed, and all the necessities of life, save what the country could supply, must be freighted in.

Here was a market for the Montana stock grower, who soon found that taking gold dust from the miners in exchange for beef was almost as profitable and far more certain than getting it from the placers. Even a poor worn-down ox might bring one hundred dollars in gold when its owner auctioned it off to the Sunday crowd of miners in the street of Virginia City where beef sold on the butcher's block at twenty-five cents a pound.<sup>1</sup>

Such prices as these and the free pastures in the mountain valleys induced many of the new arrivals to engage in stock raising. A demand was thus created for stock cattle, which was felt in Oregon, California, on the Platte, in the border settlements of Kansas and Missouri, and even in Texas. As early as 1866, Nelson Story came up over the Bozeman Trail to the Gallatin Valley with a herd of six hundred Texas longhorns that he had picked up in Dallas.<sup>2</sup>

The number of cattle in the vicinity of the mines increased rapidly. By 1868, five years after the settlement of Virginia City, the assessors of the nine counties of Montana listed 10,714 oxen and 18,801 cows and calves. Four years later, although the number of oxen had fallen off, because of the practice of using mules and horses for freighting, the number of stock cattle had risen to over 75,000.<sup>3</sup> In Deer Lodge County, the center of the new industry, cattle had become so numerous that the need for regulating the winter range was felt. The fact that the Federal Government possessed the sole power to legislate for the public domain did not prevent the Montana territorial legislature in 1866 from passing a law giving the county commissioners of Deer Lodge County power to define what should be summer grass land in the county and prohibiting stock owners from pasturing their stock on winter grass land, unless they owned the same.<sup>4</sup> Although this law was repealed the next year, it is significant, for it illustrates how soon after the establishment of the stock-growing industry in a given area, the problem arose of conserving the free grazing of the public

<sup>1</sup> Kohrs, 1328.

<sup>2</sup> A. L. Stone, *Following the Old Trails* (Missoula, 1913), 212.

<sup>3</sup> Annual reports of the auditor and treasurer of Montana Territory, Helena, 1860-1872.

<sup>4</sup> *Laws of Montana Territory*, 1866, Sess. 2, p. 35. This law, which was an invasion of the power of the Federal Government over the public domain, was repealed at the next session. *Laws of Montana Territory*, 1866, Sess. 3, p. 83.

domain. As we shall see, neither the stockman nor the government was able to solve the problem.

The settlement of a large mining population in the mountains, the resulting increase in traffic across the plains, and the building of the Union Pacific, all occurring between 1860 and 1870, rudely disturbed the Indian isolation of the preceding decade. The Indian hostilities that ensued forced the Government to give more attention to the military problem of the plains, and resulted in the establishment of forts to protect the new communities and the various lines of overland communication. These new army posts created additional local markets where good prices were paid for beef. In 1871, the newly established post at Cheyenne, Fort D. A. Russell, was paying a contract price of eight dollars and thirty-five cents a hundredweight to the cattlemen along the Platte.<sup>1</sup> Much of the trade for the early ranchers of Wyoming centered around these forts, where quantities of hay for the cavalry mounts and beef for the men, two commodities that the locality was prepared to supply, were needed.

In 1867 the rails of the Union Pacific penetrated Wyoming. The work gangs who laid the rails and the horde of hangers-on who constituted those ephemeral towns at the rail head must be fed. Buffalo, brought down by such hired men of the railroad as Buffalo Bill, helped to meet this demand, but the cattle of the Wyoming ranchman found as ready a market along this first transcontinental railroad as they had found along the old emigrant trail.

Thus, by the close of the sixties, there existed in the northern section of the High Plains and in the adjacent mountain valleys, herds of considerable size, recruited from the stock of the emigrant and gold seeker, from the work animals of the freighting companies, from the Mormon herds, and from the herds of Oregon and California. Their owners were making good profits in supplying the local market of mining camp, section crew, and military post. The possibility of expanding their herds so as to utilize to the full the enormous pastoral resources on every hand depended upon a supply of cheap cattle that could be used for stocking the empty ranges and upon a connection with the eastern market.

The inhabitants of the brash little towns on the Union Pacific were conscious that they were living along one of the great highways of the world's commerce. They speculated on the wealth of the rich

<sup>1</sup> Letter of T. H. Durbin in *Letters from Old Friends and Members of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association* (Cheyenne, 1923), 45.

cargoes from the Orient, borne eastward by long lines of freight cars. Local newspapers noted in their columns the passing of especially valuable trainloads of tea and silk from China or ore from the mines, and commented upon the fact that fortunes were rolling by their very doors every day. Out on the Laramie Plains and along the tributaries of the Platte a less romantic way freight was developing, far more essential to the well-being of these communities and of the railroad that served them. The passing of the first stock train bound for the Chicago market meant that the utilization of these northern ranges had begun in earnest.

*The Day of the Cattleman, 1929*

# Midas on a Goatskin

J. FRANK DOBIE

High on a throne of royal state, which far  
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind.

—*Paradise Lost.*

“He’s the second sorriest white man in Sabinal,” my host said. “The sorriest white man keeps a Mexican woman without marrying her, but Dee Davis lawfully wedded his *pelada*. He’s town scavenger, works at night, and sleeps most of the day. He’ll probably be awake ’long about four o’clock this evening and more than ready to tell you the kind of yarns you want to hear.”

We found Dee Davis just awaking from his siesta. He occupied a one-roomed shack and sat on a goatskin in the door, on the shady side of the house.

“I’m a great hand for goatskins,” he said. “They make good settin’ and they make good pallets.”

I sat in a board-bottomed chair out on the hard, swept ground, shaded by an umbrella-China tree as well as by the wall. The shack was set back in a yard fenced with barbed wire. Within the same enclosure but farther towards the front was a little frame house occupied by Dee Davis’s Mexican wife and their three or four half-breed children. The yard, or patio, was gay with red and orange zinnias and blue morning-glories. Out in a ramshackle picket corral to the rear a boy was playing with a burro.

“No, mister,” went on Dee Davis, who had got strung out in no time, “I don’t reckon anything ever would have come of my dad’s picking up those silver bars if it hadn’t of been for a surveyor over in Del Rio.

“You see, Dad and Uncle Ben were frontiersmen of the old style and while they’d had a lot of experiences—yes, mister, a lot of experiences—they didn’t know a thing about minerals. Well, along back in the eighties they took up some state land on Mud Creek and begun trying to farm a little. Mud Creek’s east of Del Rio. The old Spanish crossing on Mud was worn deep and always washed, but it was still used a little. Well, one day not long after an awful rain, a reg’lar gully-washer and fence-lifter, Dad and Uncle Ben started to town. They were going down into the creek when,

by heifers, what should show up right square in the old trail but the corner of some sort of metal bar. They got down out of their buggy and pried the bar out and then three other bars. The stuff was so heavy that after they put it in the buggy they had to walk and lead the horse. Instead of going on into town with it, they went back home. Well, they turned it over to Ma and then more or less forgot all about it, I guess—just went on struggling for a living.

“At that time I was still a kid and was away from home working for the San Antonio Land and Cattle Company, but I happened to ride in just a few days after the find. The Old Man and Uncle Ben never mentioned it, but Ma was so proud she was nearly busting, and as soon as I got inside the house she said she wanted to show me something. In one of the rooms was a bed with an old-timey covering on it that came down to the floor. She carried me to this bed, pulled up part of the cover that draped over to the floor, and told me to look. I looked, and, by heifers, there was bars as big as hogs. Yes, mister, as big as hogs.

“Nothing was done, however. We were a long ways from any kind of buying center and never saw anybody. As I said in the beginning, I don’t know how long those bars might have stayed right there under that bed if it hadn’t been for the surveyor. I won’t call his name, because he’s still alive and enjoying the fruits of his visit. My dad was a mighty interesting talker, and this surveyor used to come to see him just to hear him talk. Well, on one of these visits he stayed all night and slept on the bed that hid the bars. One of his shoes got under the bed, and next morning in stooping down to get it he saw the bars. At least that’s the explanation he gave. Then, of course, he got the whole story as to how the bars came to be there and where they were dug up.

“‘What you going to do with ’em?’ he asked Dad.

“‘Oh, I don’t know,’ Dad says to him. ‘Nothing much, I guess. Ma here figgers the stuff might be silver, but I don’t know what it is. More’n likely it’s not anything worth having.’

“‘Well,’ says the surveyor, ‘you’d better let me get it assayed. I’m going down to Piedras Negras in my waggin next week and can take it along as well as not.’

“The upshot was that he took all the bars. Two or three months later when Dad saw him and asked him how the assay turned out, he kinder laughed and says, ‘Ah pshaw, ’twan’t nothing but babbitting.’ Then he went on to explain how he’d left the whole caboodle down there to Piedras Negras because it wasn’t worth hauling back.

“Well, it wasn’t but a short time before we noticed this surveyor, who had been dog poor, was building a good house and buying land. He always seemed to have money and went right up. Also, he quit coming round to visit his old friend. Yes, mister, quit coming round.

“Some years went by and Dad died. The country had been consider’bly fenced up, though it’s nothing but a ranch country yet, and the roads were changed. I was still follering cows, over in Old Mexico a good part of the time. Nobody was left out on Mud Creek. Uncle Ben had moved to Del Rio. One day when I was in there I asked him if he could go back to the old trail crossing on Mud. The idea of them bars and of there being more where they come from seemed to stick in my head.

“‘Sure, I can go to the crossing,’ says Uncle Ben. ‘It’s right on the old Spanish Trail. Furthermore, it’s plainly marked by the ruins of an old house on the east bank.’

“‘Well,’ says I, ‘we’ll go over there sometime when we have a day to spare.’

“Finally, two or three years later, we got off. First we went up to the ruins of the house. About all left of it was a tumble-down stick-and-mud chimney.

“Uncle Ben and Dad, you understand, found the bars right down the bank from this place. Just across the creek, on the side next to Del Rio, was a motte of *palo blanco* [hackberry] trees. The day was awfully hot and we crossed back over there to eat our dinner under the shade and rest up a little before we dug any. About the time we got our horses staked, I noticed a little cloud in the northwest. In less than an hour it was raining pitchforks and bob-tailed heifer yearlings, and Mud Creek was tearing down with enough water to swim a steamboat. There was nothing for us to do but go back to Del Rio.

“I’ve never been back to hunt those bars since. That was close to forty years ago. A good part of that time I’ve been raising a family, but my youngest boy—the one out there fooling with the burro—is nine years old now. As soon as he’s twelve and able to shift for himself a little, I’m going back into that country and make several investigations.”

Old Dee shifted his position on the goatskin.

“My eyes won’t stand much light,” he explained. “I have worked so long at night that I can see better in the darkness than in the daylight.”

I noticed that his eyes were weak, but they had a strange light

in them. It was very pleasant as we sat there in the shade, by the bright zinnias and the soft morning-glories. Pretty soon Dee Davis would have to milk his cow and then in the dark do his work as scavenger for the town. Still there was no hurry. Dee Davis's mind was far away from scavenger filth. He went on.

"You see, the old Spanish trail crossed over into Texas from Mexico at the mouth of the Pecos River, came on east, circling Seminole Hill just west of Devil's River, on across Mud Creek, and then finally to San Antonio. From there it went to New Orleans. It was the route used by the *antiguas* for carrying their gold and silver out of Mexico to New Orleans. The country was full of Indians; it's still full of dead Spaniards and of bullion and bags of money that the Indians captured and buried or caused the original owners to bury.

"Seminole Hill hides a lot of that treasure. They say that a big jag of Quantrill's loot is located about Seminole too, but I never took much stock in this guerrilla treasure. But listen, mister, and I'll tell you about something that I do take consider'ble stock in.

"Last winter an old Mexican *pastor* named Santiago was staying here in Sabinal with some of his *parientes*. He's a little bit kin to my wife. Now, about nine-tenths of the time a sheepherder don't have a thing to do but explore every cave and examine every rock his sheep get close to. Santiago had a dog that did most of the actual herding. Well, two years ago this fall he was herding sheep about Seminole Hill.

"According to his story—and I don't doubt his word—he went pirooting into a cave one day and stepped right on top of more money than he'd ever seen before all put together. It was just laying there on the floor, some of it stacked up and some of it scattered around every which way. He begun to gather some of it up and had put three pieces in his *jato*—a kind of wallet, you know, that *pastores* carry their provisions in—when he heard the terriblest noise behind him he had ever heard in all his born days. He said it was like the sounds of trace-chains rattling, and dried cowhides being drug at the end of a rope, and panther yells, and the groans of a dying man all mixed up. He was scared half out of his skin. He got out of the cave as fast as his legs would carry him.

"An hour or so later, when he'd kinder collected his wits, he discovered three of the coins still in his *jato*. They were old square 'dobe dollars like the Spanish used to make. As soon as he got a chance, he took them to Villa Acuna across the river from Del Rio,

and there a barkeeper traded him three bottles of beer and three silver dollars, American, for them.

“Well, you know how superstitious Mexicans are. Wild horses couldn’t drag old Santiago back inside that cave, but he promised to take me out there and show me the mouth of it. We were just waiting for milder weather when somebody sent in here and got him to herd sheep. Maybe he’ll be back this winter. If he is, we’ll go out to the cave. It won’t take but a day.”

Dee Davis rolled another cigarette from his supply of Black Horse leaf tobacco and corn shucks. His Mexican wife, plump and easy-going, came out into the yard and began watering the flowers from a tin can. He hardly noticed her, though as he glanced in her direction he seemed to inhale his smoke with a trifle more of deliberation. He was a spare man, and gray moustaches that drooped in Western sheriff style hid only partly a certain nervousness of the facial muscles; yet his few gestures and low voice were as deliberate—and as natural—as the flop of a burro’s ears.

“What I’d rather get at than Santiago’s cave,” he resumed, “is that old smelter across the Rio Grande in Mexico just below the mouth of the Pecos. That smelter wasn’t put there to grind corn on, or to boil frijoles in, or to roast goat ribs over, or anything like that. No, mister, not for anything like that.

“It’s kinder under a bluff that fronts the river. I know one ranchman who had an expert mining engineer with him, and they spent a whole week exploring up and down the bluff and back in the mountains. I could of told them in a minute that the mine was not above the mouth of the Pecos. If it had of been above, the trails made by miners carrying *parihuelas* could still be seen. I’ve peered over every foot of that ground and not a *parihuela* trace is there. You don’t know what a *parihuela* is? Well, it’s a kind of hod, shaped like a stretcher, with a pair of handles in front and a pair behind so two men can carry it. That’s what the slave Indians carried ore on.

“No, sir, the mine that supplied that smelter—and it was a big mine—was below the mouth of the Pecos. It’s covered up now by a bed of gravel that has probably washed in there during the last eighty or ninety years. All a man has to do to uncover the shaft is to take a few teams and scrapers and clear out the gravel. The mouth of the shaft will then be as plain as daylight. That will take a little capital. You ought to do this. I wish you would. All I want is a third for my information.

“Now, there is an old lost mine away back in the Santa Rosa

Mountains that the Mexicans called El Lipano. The story goes that the Lipan Indians used to work it. It was gold and as rich as twenty-dollar gold pieces. El Lipano didn't have no smelter. The Lipans didn't need one.

"And I want to tell you that those Lipan Indians could smell gold as far as a hungry coyote can smell fresh liver. Yes, mister, they could smell it. One time out there in the Big Bend an old-timey Lipan came to D. C. Bourland's ranch and says to him, 'Show me the *tinaja* I'm looking for and I'll show you the gold.' He got down on his hands and knees and showed how his people used to pound out gold ornaments in the rock *tinajas* across the Rio Grande from Reagan Canyon.

"Now that long bluff overlooking the lost mine in the gravel I was just speaking about hides something worth while. I guess maybe you never met old Uncle Dick Sanders. I met him the first time while I was driving through the Indian Territory up the trail to Dodge. He was government interpreter for the Comanche Indians at Fort Sill and was a great hombre among them.

"Well, several years ago an old, old Comanche who was dying sent for Uncle Dick.

"'I'm dying,' the Comanche says. 'I want nothing more on this earth. You can do nothing for me. But you have been a true friend to me and my people. Before I leave, I want to do you a favor.'

"Then the old Indian, as Uncle Dick Sanders reported the facts to me, went on to tell how when he was a young buck he was with a party raiding horses below the Rio Grande. He said that while they were on a long bluff just south of the river they saw a Spanish cart train winding among the mountains. The soldiers to guard it were riding ahead, and while they were going down into a canyon out of sight, the Comanches made a dash, cut off three *carretas*, and killed the drivers.

"There wasn't a thing in the *carretas* but rawhide bags full of gold and silver coins. Well, this disgusted the Comanches mightily. Yes, mister, disgusted them. They might make an ornament out of a coin now and then, but they didn't know how to trade with money. They traded with buffalo robes and horses.

"So what they did now with the rawhide sacks was to cut them open and pour the gold and silver into some deep cracks they happened to notice in the long bluff. Two or three of the sacks, though, they brought over to this side of the Rio Grande and hid in a hole. Then they piled rocks over the hole. This place was

between two forks, the old Comanche said, one a running river walled with rock and the other a deep, dry canyon. Not far below where the canyon emptied into the river, the river itself emptied into the Rio Grande.

“After the Comanche got through explaining all this to Uncle Dick Sanders, he asked for a lump of charcoal and a dressed deer-skin. Then he drew on the skin a sketch of the Rio Grande, the bluffs to the south, a stream with a west prong coming in from the north, and the place of the buried coins. Of course he didn’t put names on the map. The only name he knew was Rio Grande del Norte. When Sanders came down here looking for the Comanche stuff, of course he brought the map with him and he showed it to me. The charcoal lines had splotched until you could hardly trace them, but Sanders had got an Indian to trace them over with a kind of greenish paint.

“Uncle Dick had some sort of theory that the Comanche had mistook the Frio River for the Rio Grande. Naturally he hadn’t got very far in locating the ground, much less the money. He was disgusted with the whole business. Told me I could use his information and have whatever I found. I’m satisfied that Devil’s River and Painted Cave Canyon are the forks that the Indians hid the *maletas* of money between, and the long bluff on the south side of the Rio Grande where they poured coins into the chinks is the same bluff I’ve been talking about.”

Dee Davis got up, reached for a stick, squatted on the ground, and outlined the deerskin map that Uncle Dick Sanders had shown him. Then he sat down again on the goatskin and contemplated the map in silence.

It was wonderfully pleasant sitting there in the shade, the shadows growing longer and the evening growing cooler, listening—whether to Dee Davis or to a hummingbird in the morning-glories. I did not want the tales to stop. I remarked that I had just been out in the Big Bend country and had camped on Reagan Canyon, famed for its relation to the Lost Nigger Mine. I expected that Dee Davis would know something about this. He did.

“Now listen,” he interposed in his soft voice, “I don’t expect you to tell me all you know about the Lost Nigger Mine, and I know some things I can’t tell you. You’ll understand that. You see I was *vaciero* for a string of *pastores* in that very country and got a good deal farther into the mountains, I guess, than any of the Reagans ever got. You may not believe me, but I’ll swear on a stack of Bibles as high as your head that I can lead you straight to

the nigger who found the mine. Of course I can't tell you where he is. You'll understand that. It was this away.

"One morning the Reagans sent Bill Kelley—that's the nigger's name—to hunt a horse that had got away with the saddle on. A few hours later Jim Reagan rode up on the nigger and asked him if he had found the horse.

"'No, sah,' the nigger says, 'but jes' looky here, Mister Jim, I'se foun' a gold mine.'

"'Damn your soul,' says Jim Reagan, 'we're not paying you to hunt gold mines. Pull your freight and bring in that horse.'

"Yes, mister, that's the way Jim Reagan took the news of the greatest gold mine that's ever been found in the Southwest—but he repented a million times afterwards.

"Well, as you've no doubt heard, the nigger got wind of how he was going to be pitched into the Rio Grande and so that night he lit a shuck on one of the Reagan horses. Then a good while afterwards when the Reagans found out how they'd played the wilds in running off, you might say, the goose that laid the golden egg, they started in to trail him down. No telling how many thousands of dollars they did spend trying to locate Nigger Bill—the only man who could put his hand on the gold.

"I've knowed a lot of the men who looked for the Lost Nigger Mine. Not one of them has gone to the right place. One other thing I'll tell you. Go to that round mountain down in the *vegas* on the Mexican side just opposite the old Reagan camp. They call this mountain El Diablo, also Niggerhead; some calls it El Capitan. Well, about half way up it is a kind of shelf, or mesa, maybe two acres wide. On this shelf close back against the mountain wall is a *chapote* bush. Look under that *chapote* and you'll see a hole about the size of an old-timey dug well. Look down this hole and you'll see an old ladder—the kind made without nails, rungs being tied on the poles with rawhide and the fibre of Spanish dagger. Well, right by that hole, back a little and sorter hid behind the *chapote*, I once upon a time found a *mecapal*. I guess you want me to tell you what that is. It's a kind of basket in which Mexican miners used to carry up their ore. It's fastened on the head and shoulders.

"Now, I never heard of a *mecapal* being used to haul water up in. And I didn't see any water in that hole. No, mister, I didn't see any water.

"As I said, as soon as my boy gets to be twelve years old—he's nine now—I'm going out in that country and use some of the knowledge I've been accumulating."

Dee Davis leaned over and began lacing the brogan shoes on his stockingless feet. It was about time for him to begin work. But I was loath to leave. How pleasant it was there! Maybe Dee Davis is "the second sorriest white man in Sabinal." I don't know, but it seemed to me then, and it seems to me still, that there are many ways of living worse than the way of this village scavenger with a soft goatskin to sit on, and aromatic Black Horse tobacco to inhale leisurely through a clean white shuck, and bright zinnias and blue morning-glories in the dooryard, and long siestas while the shadows of evening lengthen to soften the light of day, and an easy-going Mexican wife, and playing around a patient burro out in the corral an urchin that will be twelve *mañana*, as it were, and then—. Then silver bars out of Mud Creek as big as hogs—and heaps of old square 'dobe dollars in Santiago's cave on Seminole Hill—and Uncle Dick Sanders' gold in the chinks of the long bluff across the Rio Grande—and somewhere in the gravel down under the bluff a rich mine that a few mules and scrapers might uncover in a day—and, maybe so, the golden Lipano out in the Santa Rosas beyond—and, certainly and above all, the great Lost Nigger Mine of free gold far up the Rio Bravo in the solitude of the Big Bend. Dee Davis is just one of Coronado's children.

*Coronado's Children*, 1930

# Dubious Battle in California

JOHN STEINBECK

In sixty years a complete revolution has taken place in California agriculture. Once its principal products were hay and cattle. Today fruits and vegetables are its most profitable crops. With the change in the nature of farming there has come a parallel change in the nature and amount of the labor necessary to carry it on. Truck gardens, while they give a heavy yield per acre, require much more labor and equipment than the raising of hay and livestock. At the same time these crops are seasonal, which means that they are largely handled by migratory workers. Along with the intensification of farming made necessary by truck gardening has come another important development. The number of large-scale farms, involving the investment of thousands of dollars, has increased; so has the number of very small farms of from five to ten acres. But the middle farm, of from 100 to 300 acres, is in process of elimination.

There are in California, therefore, two distinct classes of farmers widely separated in standard of living, desires, needs, and sympathies: the very small farmer who more often than not takes the side of the workers in disputes, and the speculative farmer, like A. J. Chandler, publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*, or like Herbert Hoover and William Randolph Hearst, absentee owners who possess huge sections of land. Allied with these large individual growers have been the big incorporated farms, owned by their stockholders and farmed by instructed managers, and a large number of bank farms, acquired by foreclosure and operated by superintendents whose labor policy is dictated by the bank. For example, the Bank of America is very nearly the largest farm owner and operator in the State of California.

These two classes have little or no common ground; while the small farmer is likely to belong to the grange, the speculative farmer belongs to some such organization as the Associated Farmers of California, which is closely tied to the state Chamber of Commerce. This group has as its major activity resistance to any attempt of farm labor to organize. Its avowed purpose has been the distribution of news reports and leaflets tending to show that every attempt to organize agricultural workers was the work

of red agitators and that every organization was Communist inspired.

The completion of the transcontinental railroads left in the country many thousands of Chinese and some Hindus who had been imported for the work. At about the same time the increase of fruit crops, with their heavy seasonal need for pickers, created a demand for this mass of cheap labor. These people, however, did not long remain on the land. They migrated to the cities, rented small plots of land there, and, worst of all, organized in the so-called "tongs," which were able to direct their efforts as a group. Soon the whites were inflamed to race hatred, riots broke out against the Chinese, and repressive activities were undertaken all over the state, until these people, who had been a tractable and cheap source of labor, were driven from the fields.

To take the place of the Chinese, the Japanese were encouraged to come into California; and they, even more than the Chinese, showed an ability not only to obtain land for their subsistence but to organize. The "Yellow Peril" agitation was the result. Then, soon after the turn of the century Mexicans were imported in great numbers. For a while they were industrious workers, until the process of importing twice as many as were needed in order to depress wages made their earnings drop below any conceivable living standard. In such conditions they did what the others had done; they began to organize. The large growers immediately opened fire on them. The newspapers were full of the radicalism of the Mexican unions. Riots became common in the Imperial Valley and in the grape country in and adjacent to Kern County. Another wave of importations was arranged, from the Philippine Islands, and the cycle was repeated—wage depression due to abundant labor, organization, and the inevitable race hatred and riots.

This brings us almost to the present. The drought in the Middle West has very recently made available an enormous amount of cheap labor. Workers have been coming to California in nondescript cars from Oklahoma, Nebraska, Texas, and other states, parts of which have been rendered uninhabitable by drought. Poverty-stricken after the destruction of their farms, their last reserves used up in making the trip, they have arrived so beaten and destitute that they have been willing at first to work under any conditions and for any wages offered. This migration started on a considerable scale about two years ago and is increasing all the time.

For a time it looked as though the present cycle would be identical with the earlier ones, but there are several factors in this influx which differentiate it from the others. In the first place, the migrants are undeniably American and not deportable. In the second place, they were not lured to California by a promise of good wages, but are refugees as surely as though they had fled from destruction by an invader. In the third place, they are not drawn from a peon class, but have either owned small farms or been farm hands in the early American sense, in which the "hand" is a member of the employing family. They have one fixed idea, and that is to acquire land and settle on it. Probably the most important difference is that they are not easily intimidated. They are courageous, intelligent, and resourceful. Having gone through the horrors of the drought and with immense effort having escaped from it, they cannot be herded, attacked, starved, or frightened as all the others were.

Let us see what the emigrants from the dust bowl find when they arrive in California. The ranks of permanent and settled labor are filled. In most cases all resources have been spent in making the trip from the dust bowl. Unlike the Chinese and the Filipinos, the men rarely come alone. They bring wives and children, now and then a few chickens and their pitiful household goods, though in most cases these have been sold to buy gasoline for the trip. It is quite usual for a man, his wife, and from three to eight children to arrive in California with no possessions but the rattletrap car they travel in and the ragged clothes on their bodies. They often lack bedding and cooking utensils.

During the spring, summer, and part of the fall the man may find some kind of agricultural work. The top pay for a successful year will not be over \$400, and if he has any trouble or is not agile, strong, and quick it may well be only \$150. It will be seen that rent is out of the question. Clothes cannot be bought. Every available cent must go for food and a reserve to move the car from harvest to harvest. The migrant will stop in one of two federal camps, in a state camp, in houses put up by the large or small farmers, or in the notorious squatters' camps. In the state and federal camps he will find sanitary arrangements and a place to pitch his tent. The camps maintained by the large farmers are of two classes—houses which are rented to the workers at what are called nominal prices, \$4 to \$8 a month, and camp grounds which are little if any better than the squatters' camps. Since rent is such

a problem, let us see how the houses are fitted. Ordinarily there is one room, no running water; one toilet and one bathroom are provided for two or three hundred persons. . . . Some of the large ranches maintain what are called model workers' houses. One such ranch, run by a very prominent man, has neat single-room houses built of whitewashed adobe. They are said to have cost \$500 apiece. They are rented for \$5 a month. This ranch pays twenty cents an hour as opposed to the thirty cents paid at other ranches and indorsed by the grange in the community. Since this rugged individual is saving  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent of his labor cost and still charging \$5 a month rent for his houses, it will be readily seen that he is getting a very fair return on his money besides being generally praised as a philanthropist. The reputation of this ranch, however, is that the migrants stay only long enough to get money to buy gasoline with, and then move on.

The small farmers are not able to maintain camps of any comfort or with any sanitary facilities except one or two holes dug for toilets. The final resource is the squatters' camp, usually located on the bank of some water-course. The people pack into them. They use the water-course for drinking, bathing, washing their clothes, and to receive their refuse, with the result that epidemics start easily and are difficult to check. Stanislaus County, for example, has a nice culture of hookworm in the mud by its squatters' camp. The people in these camps, because of long-continued privation, are in no shape to fight illness. . . .

In these squatters' camps the migrant will find squalor beyond anything he has yet had to experience and intimidation almost unchecked. At one camp it is the custom of deputy sheriffs, who are also employees of a great ranch nearby, to drive by the camp for hours at a time, staring into the tents as though trying to memorize faces. The communities in which these camps exist want migratory workers to come for the month required to pick the harvest, and to move on when it is over. If they do not move on, they are urged to with guns.

These are some of the conditions California offers the refugees from the dust bowl. But the refugees are even less content with the starvation wages and the rural slums than were the Chinese, the Filipinos, and the Mexicans. Having their families with them, they are not so mobile as the earlier immigrants were. If starvation sets in, the whole family starves, instead of just one man. Therefore they have been quick to see that they must organize for their own safety.

Attempts to organize have been met with a savagery from the large growers beyond anything yet attempted. In Kern County a short time ago a group met to organize under the A. F. of L. They made out their form and petition for a charter and put it in the mail for Washington. That night a representative of Associated Farmers wired Washington for information concerning a charter granted to these workers. The Washington office naturally replied that it had no knowledge of such a charter. In the Bakersfield papers the next day appeared a story that the A. F. of L. denied the affiliation; consequently the proposed union must be of Communist origin.

But the use of the term communism as a bugbear has nearly lost its sting. An official of a speculative-farmer group, when asked what he meant by a Communist, replied: "Why, he's the guy that wants twenty-five cents an hour when we're paying twenty." This realistic and cynical definition has finally been understood by the workers, so that the term is no longer the frightening thing it was. And when a county judge said, "California agriculture demands that we create and maintain a peonage," the future of unorganized agricultural labor was made clear to every man in the field.

The usual repressive measures have been used against these migrants: shooting by deputy sheriffs in "self-defense," jailing without charge, refusal of trial by jury, torture and beating by night riders. But even in the short time that these American migrants have been out here there has been a change. It is understood that they are being attacked not because they want higher wages, not because they are Communists, but simply because they want to organize. And to the men, since this defines the thing not to be allowed, it also defines the thing that is completely necessary to the safety of the workers. . . .

It is fervently to be hoped that the great group of migrant workers so necessary to the harvesting of California's crops may be given the right to live decently, that they may not be so badgered, tormented, and hurt that in the end they become avengers of the hundreds of thousands who have been tortured and starved before them.

*The Nation*, September 12, 1936

# The Spirit of the West

WILLIAM T. FOSTER

Nehemiah appears to have been the first man in recorded history with the true spirit of the West. The fourth chapter of Nehemiah sums up his achievements in laying out a new city: "Now the city was large and great; but the people were few, and the houses were not builded."

Eloquent and adequate is this description, as applied to many a Pacific Coast city of today. Its builders are not greatly concerned over people and houses; they will come rapidly enough. The main point is that the city is large and great. And so the builders cannot be persuaded to stop their work in order to hear wise men of the East explain why it is impossible in such a place to construct a great city. Anyone crossing the deserts of Southern California a generation ago could see that few people would ever live where Los Angeles has since been doubling its population in every decade.

The Bible does not tell us that Nehemiah erected on the walls of his city-to-be a huge electric sign with the words, "Watch Tacoma Grow." He did well, however, with the advertising means at his disposal. When Sanballat urged him to stop building and come down from the city wall to the plain of Ono, he replied in words that may still be read, thanks to the Gideons, in any hotel room. "I am doing a great work," said he, "so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it and come down to you?" And when the people threatened him with dire consequences if he went on with the work, he answered, "Should such a man as I flee? I will not go."

Thus have the builders of Pacific Coast cities answered the calamity-howlers, while they sustained their courage with the vision of the future. And to the scoffing world they have declared: "The city is large and great, though the people are, indeed, few therein, and the houses are not builded."

## I

If you go to Vancouver, British Columbia, over the Canadian Rockies, and thence by boat, via Victoria, to Seattle, you will find yourself caught by the spirit of the West—or ridiculing and resisting it—before you reach the dock. For there will be at least one

returning citizen of Seattle on board who remembers the last sign he read before leaving his city: "Do not forget to boost Seattle while you are away."

Seattle people do not forget. They have heard what is said of them in the Bible: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." And so they do not light a candle and put it under a bushel. They feel it their duty to set it up where it giveth light unto all those who are still in the darkness of the East. Besides, their bushels are all busy carrying food to the Orient.

Once you are actually in this city you feel the spirit of the West, whether you will or no. Possibly there is no place where the Western spirit of coöperation is more contagious. The whole sprightly, smiling, hand-clasping population seems engaged in one vast "Paul Jones"—all hands round and swing together to the right, with no one sitting aloof in the corner, refusing to join the dance, and remarking how much better he could manage the affair if he wanted to. The "knocker" finds the life of Seattle uncongenial. Somebody is sure to tell him that an automobile knocks going uphill, and a man knocks going down. And a man going downhill in Seattle is headed straight for the chilling waters of Puget Sound.

Seattle literally has the faith that moves mountains. When a mountain stood in the way of a business street, the mountain hadn't a chance. It was washed into the ocean; and on its site was erected the chief hotel of Seattle. Another opportunity for the city to quote Scripture to its purpose. A Seattle man of the true faith would not be surprised to find a mountain moved overnight.

Such a citizen of Seattle is said to have met some old friends one evening in that little city to the south that has such difficulty in pronouncing the name "Rainier."

"You should see how Seattle is growing," he cried.

"Yes; I was there only yesterday," replied one of his Tacoma friends.

"Ah," said he, "you should have seen Seattle this morning!"

This is youth—the overweening self-confidence of youth, if you like; or, if you prefer, youth with the courage of its emotions. The West still has the buoyant faith of the uncouth college freshman from the farm. Sometime it may enter the sophomoric stage, show signs of tired feelings, and convey the mature impression of having experienced all the joy of life and found there is nothing in it.

But is this faith, after all, different from the faith of many Eastern communities? Men who have lived on the Pacific Coast do not ask that question. They know what they mean by the spirit

of the West. Elsewhere, they admit, that same spirit is a driving force in individuals. It is rarely found in entire groups. In the West, the man of boundless faith is typical: he feels at home; he enjoys a consciousness of kind. In the East, he may be lonesome: the crowd is not with him. He must overcome, not only his own inertia, but that of the community as well. Yes, he is sure there is a difference. An inveterate Westerner is a man from the East who has returned once to his old home to see whether that difference is really what it seems to be.

Once in a New England community I felt the spirit of the West; and that was in a section that New England would hardly recognize as itself—Aroostook County, New England's "farthest East." Years ago I found everybody in Houlton and Caribou talking Aroostook potato land as if it were the best in the world, and investing their money as if they believed what they said. Theirs was the eloquence of a Hood River man talking apples, a Fresno man talking raisins, a Redlands man talking oranges.

But when I think of the spirit of rural New England, I do not think of Aroostook: I think rather of the Maine farmer in another county, to whom I applied for a job at the confident age of eleven.

"No," said he, "I reckon I won't hire no help. I can't tell how the crops are gonter turn out, and I guess I'd better jest putter along by myself."

I explained to him that his crops would have much better chances with my help; but he was obdurate. He would not risk the "ten dollars a month and found" for which I offered myself. Twenty years later, I found him still puttering along by himself, his apple orchards still overgrown with weeds and caterpillars. And there were fewer people in the whole county than on that fatal day when the putterer rejected my services.

"The glories of the past!" exclaims the man of the East.

"The wonders of the future!" cries the man of the West.

A college student, returning this year to the Pacific Coast, after having spent a year in Boston, summed up his impressions in this way:

"'Visit our forty-two story L. C. Smith Building and look down on our growing city,' urges Seattle, in a frenzy of enthusiasm.

"'Visit our three-story Faneuil Hall and look up its history,' replies Boston, with a deprecating smile."

In the seventeenth century, a committee of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, appointed to investigate the agricultural possibilities of the country, reported that there was little cultivable land west of

Newton, Massachusetts. In a later century, Senator Benton, in an eloquent speech in Congress, proved conclusively that there could never be any successful settlements beyond the Rocky Mountains. Even our universities have failed to see their future large enough. They have planned and located each building as if they thought it would be the last one. In 1820, the regents of the University of Indiana, having spent \$2400 on a building to house the entire university, apologized for their extravagance. "We are aware," they admitted, "that the plan proposed may be opposed on account of its magnitude." A generation ago, the regents of the University of Illinois, in dedicating one of those monstrosities of the "Late General Grant" period of architecture, declared that it would meet all the needs of the University for a century to come.

Even west of Boston, it seems, men sometimes lack faith in the possibilities of their country. A Kansas farmer, they say, having ordered and received two windmills, sent one back, fearing that there might not be wind enough for two. And that was in Kansas, where—if Dr. Lindley can be trusted—a man does not run after his hat when the wind takes it away: he merely thrusts his hand into the air and takes another hat.

"O ye of little faith," we cry, when we consider the failure of our forefathers to see the future "large and great." Little do we realize that our own vision may seem to our children's children like the \$2400 extravagance of the University of Indiana.

## II

Though faith, in the west as elsewhere, is the substance of things hoped for, it is built in the West on the substance of things already lavishly bestowed by nature. A permanent impression of this abundance remains with anyone who has really seen the Far West. That impression was mine the first time I crossed the Sandy River, a stream that flows into the Columbia River where the Columbia Highway begins. There I saw a man, equipped only with the inverted top of a birdcage fastened to the end of a long pole, pull out about all the fish he could carry home in his "flivver."

If I cannot expect you to believe this story which, being Western, a fish story, and a Ford story, is thrice suspect—or to believe that I looked down, from the same bridge, upon a man in a large dory who had piled up such a heap of glistening fish that the craft sank with the weight, how can I expect you to believe what is still less credible, that the sight did not seem to me extraordinary, but

merely to typify Western abundance! It made me think of similar sights all the way from Vancouver to San Diego.

Faith in the boundless future greeted me, on my first Thanksgiving Day in the West, in a city-to-be of Southern California. Fate, aided and abetted by the Southern Pacific Railroad, deposited me, a descendant of Pilgrim fathers, in a community that seemed never, outside of a poultry-show, to have heard of Plymouth Rock.

Through the only open door on the only business street, I found my way to Carlos—cook, waiter, and proprietor of the only eating-house. And Carlos, strong in Mexican accent and Western hospitality, served me local color and sour bread. I could have forgiven him the sour bread; but then came a concoction rolled in corn husks upon which I was sure he had lavished, with Western abandon, an entire bottle of tabasco sauce.

While I was wondering how to dispose of this fire-brand without the risk of starting another Mexican War, a cowboy, bursting through the door as if rehearsing for a motion-picture, came to my rescue with a dramatic cut-in. No sooner had he whooped upon the scene—arrayed in red bandanna, pistols, and all the other stage properties—than he noted the absence of Thanksgiving from my face. He took in the whole sad situation at a glance. Whisky had loosened the strings of his imagination—and of his purse.

“Give the young feller a genu-ine, I say genu-ine, Thanksgivin’ dinner,” he cried, as he threw a roll of bank notes around the room. “Give the young feller the genu-ine thing. Ye get me? Turkey and stuffin’ and cranb’ry sauce and all the fixin’s. I’ll pay the bills.”

After we had twice collected his scattered bank notes and stuffed them into his pockets, we convinced him that the Carlos shack was no place in which to celebrate a New England holiday. He then proposed a personally-conducted tour of the city.

At the next street corner, he began to point out the objects of local interest. “This,” he said, “is Thirty-Second Street.”

“Then where,” I asked, “can First Street be?”

“Oh, that,” he replied, with a sweep of his arm and a faraway look in his eyes, “that is way out yonder on the prairie. That ain’t been laid out yet.”

Equally amusing is every pioneer settlement where the people are few and the houses not yet builded—the little box of a railroad station, with its plot of “self-conscious geraniums”; behind it, stretched out on Main Street, the General Emporium with its false front and its Post-Office attachment, the two-story hotel, the three empty saloons, the four real estate offices; and, beyond these

monuments of failure and of hope, regiments of house-lots staked out as far as One Hundred and Thirty-Ninth Street.

"The great West," exclaimed the incredulous traveler, "where every hill is a mountain, every cat is a mountain lion, every crick is a river, and every man is a liar!" Some liars have come from the East, no doubt; but while we laugh at the city that is large and great only in imagination, we do well to recall that Portland was such a city only half a century ago. And the surviving pioneers have found that the "boosters" of those days who told the biggest lies about its future told the most truth. Westerners do not exaggerate their future possibilities. Perhaps, in spite of their modesty, they would lie about the future if they could: they lack sufficient imagination.

On a street corner in the heart of Portland is the Church of Our Father, Unitarian. On the other three corners of that intersection are one of the chief office buildings, one of the chief theaters, and one of the chief hotels. When the church was located there, the people had to go through the woods to reach it. And there were scoffers even in those days. They laughed at the unpractical young minister, fresh from the Harvard Divinity School, who builded his first meeting-house in the wilderness. But Thomas Lamb Eliot, a worthy descendant of the pioneer apostle to the Indians, and Henrietta Eliot, his wife, with a babe in her arms, had managed to cross the Isthmus of Panama, had found their way, in various ships, from port to port, up to the Columbia River, and had shown at once that truly Western faith in the city that was not yet builded.

Dr. Eliot sometimes tells of a pioneer experience in driving from Olympia to Tenino, in western Washington, to visit an Indian reservation. His guide was Hazard Stevens. Before they got into the buggy, he asked Mr. Stevens about the road.

"Oh, it's a good road," answered Mr. Stevens.

On their journey they frequently had to lift the wagon out of holes and cut away logs that had fallen across the road. The way was so narrow that, when they met a wagon at one place, they could pass it only by taking their buggy apart, lifting it piece by piece over the wagon, and then putting it together again. When, after various other struggles, they actually reached Tenino, Dr. Eliot said—

"There is one question I would like to ask, Mr. Stevens. What is your definition of a good road?"

"Oh," came the quick reply, "any road you can get through."

There you have the spirit of the West. Had men insisted on any other definition of a good road, they would not have crossed the Rockies.

### III

Men who have known the pioneers need not be told that Hazard Stevens enjoyed the humor of his remark. Indeed, the characteristic ability of the Westerner to go down in defeat and bob up with his cheerful confidence unshaken is due in part to this sense of humor. It prompts him to publish the following advertisement in his local paper: "For exchange, two lots in University Park for anything on earth except more lots in University Park." His neighbors do not resent this reference to a blighted land boom. They laugh with him, even though they, too, have lots in University Park that yield nothing but weeds, taxes, and reproaches.

It was the city of Salem, in the state of Oregon, that proposed to a venerable city in the East that, since it is confusing to have two cities of the same name, it might be well for Salem, Massachusetts, to change its name. Shades of all the witches! This bumptious young upstart proposes that the dignified home of Nathaniel Hawthorne should give up its tradition-hallowed name. How preposterous! How like the West! And at once come protests from the affronted East. Whereupon, the City Fathers of Salem, Oregon, chuckle and look again at the motto on the council chamber walls: "Never mind what people say, as long as they talk about you."

Having thus attracted attention to their own little spot in the Willamette Valley, the people of Salem proceed to cash in their free publicity and their loganberries and the prohibition movement by selling several million dollars worth of "Loju" to the affronted cities of the East.

Mistake not the spirit of the West. It is revealed in much more than ridiculous bragging: it is revealed to the initiated in a sense of humor all its own. The comic supplements of its daily papers do cast a lurid glow, as Dr. Crothers says, upon our boasted sense of humor. They are often as barren as the sage-brush prairies of Nevada. But they are only one of the many mistakes the frontiersmen have taken from the East, when their own genius would have served them far better.

To one who misses the humor, it seems that our Californians talk about their scenery as if they had made it all. In the high Sierras, an Oxford graduate and his Californian guide gazed on the snow-capped peaks at sunset. "A beautiful view," exclaimed the Califor-

nian, "if I do say it myself." Both men are still chuckling over the remark, each because he thinks the other missed the humor.

#### IV

To most of us, these are mere incidents, more or less amusing. To the sociologist, they are the stuff the history of human progress is made of. For the Pacific West, to the sociologist, is the last frontier. To him human progress is one long story of the more virile and adventurous members of an older civilization establishing themselves in a new land—the frontier. Thus, driven by drought and famine, the hardiest and most hopeful remnants of Asiatic tribes, centuries before Christ, found their way westward—ever westward—to the Mediterranean, and there built wonderful cities. They were the "boosters" of their day. Later, in the declining days of Egypt and Babylon, Crete became the new frontier. The eloquent evidence of its flourishing leadership we are now digging up, after it has been buried for thousands of years. "Watch Crete Grow"—or its classical equivalent—was no doubt the slogan of the time.

To the ancient cities that bordered the Eastern Mediterranean, Greece became the Far West in the days when the islands of the Aegean were flowering into a higher type of civilization than the wise men of the East had ever conceived. Westward—ever westward—the course of empire took its way: across the continent to the coast of Europe, across the Channel to the British Isles, across the Atlantic to the New World, across the border states to the Valley of the Mississippi, and finally—by means of "good roads"—across the Rockies to the Pacific Coast. It is the last frontier. The march of progress has circled the globe!

By the roadside, most of the marchers have stopped to rest and have never taken the road again. Others, like Kipling's "Explorer," have stopped only

Till a voice, as bad as Conscience, rang interminable changes  
On one everlasting whisper, day and night repeated—so:  
"Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the  
Ranges—  
Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you.  
Go!"

Men who heard that voice, men of energy and courage, ready to take a chance, left old towns that seemed socially stagnant and sought the freer spirit of border communities.

In Texas they say the best steers are found on the outside of the

herd. Natural selection has everywhere done its work. It has sorted out and sent westward some of the most enterprising youths of communities that were growing old, and has left behind most of those averse to change. The left-behinds have frowned upon the new because it is new. They have fallen down and worshiped the god-of-things-as-they-are, and inscribed upon the altar a slogan which the pioneers of all ages have repudiated: "Whatever has been should continue to be."

That slogan renounces originality, adaptability, and variability. But change is the immutable law of progress. Whatever resists change is dying; whatever does not change is dead.

From the study of this westward march of civilization, the sociologist believes that he has discovered a law of progress. He believes, with the philosopher Comte, that the preponderating influence of youth in any community is a true cause of progress. He believes that he can arrange communities in the order of their possibilities of progress, if he but knows what proportion of the people of each group is old and rigid, and what proportion is new and flexible. Thus he can determine the degree of success of a city in adjusting itself to the new conditions with which the War has confronted the world.

This is the chief significance of the growth in population of the large cities on the Pacific Coast. Ten years ago more than half the people in these cities had arrived within the previous decade. More than half the people in these cities today were not there ten years ago. The great vitality of these cities—shown by the coincidence of a high birth rate and a low death rate, by the large numbers of comparatively young people coming from the East, and by the heterogeneity of the population—is a mark of identity of the last frontier with those which, throughout the ages, have led the westward march of civilization.

Yes, it is the younger people as a rule who respond to the call of the West. But that is not all. No sooner are they actually living in the West than they feel younger still. For natural selection not only operates to send the younger people westward, but it also has the effect of stimulating newcomers to larger capacities for living and loving—and this is youth!

Have you heard from your middle-aged acquaintance who lately left your Eastern city? He has already become one of the older residents of a city beyond the Rockies. Yet he is a boy again. He has taken again to dancing and to camping and to out-of-door games. He is eager to climb every snow-capped peak in sight. He

has found out what Dr. Hall meant when he said we do not stop playing because we grow old, but grow old because we stop playing. The rosy visions of boyhood are his again. Romance beckons to him. Nothing seems impossible. He is like the boy who, when asked whether he could play a violin, said he did not know: he had never tried it. The Westerner today, like the miner of '49, is ever on the brink of great success. He is thrilled with the adventure, and he looks upon his new discoveries with the big-eyed wonder of a boy at his first circus.

Do not laugh at him—imitate him. He is the Ponce de Leon of an age of Science. He seeks no magical fountain. He knows that youth is the spirit of youth. And he has found it in the West.

Must you laugh at him still? Very well, he will laugh, too. You cannot discourage him. Nehemiah will not come down from his high wall. He has caught the spirit of the West. Flood and fire, earthquake and panic, war and anarchists, the high cost of living and the scoffer from the East—each is sure to find him smiling, resourceful, confident. He sees his future large and great, though the people who share his visions are few, and the castles of his dreams are not yet builded.

*The Atlantic Monthly*, July, 1920

# These States



Rockwell Kent Illustration for *Leaves of Grass*, courtesy of The Heritage Press



# American Attitudes

## 1. Representative Government

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

[In America,] all political power is strictly a trust, granted by the constituent to the representative. These representatives possess different duties; and as the greatest check that is imposed on them, while in the exercise of their offices, exists in the manner in which the functions are balanced by each other, it is of the last importance that neither class trespass on the trusts that are not especially committed to its keeping.

The machinery of the state being the same in appearance in this country and in that from which we are derived, inconsiderate commentators are apt to confound their principles. In England, the institutions have been the result of those circumstances to which time has accidentally given birth. The power of the king was derived from violence, the monarch before the act of succession, in the reign of Queen Anne, claiming the throne in virtue of the conquest by William, in 1066. In America, the institutions are the result of deliberate consultation, mutual concessions, and design. In England, the people may have gained by diminishing the power of the king, who first obtained it by force; but in America to assail the rightful authority of the executive, is attacking a system framed by the constituencies of the states, who are virtually the people, for their own benefit. No assault can be made on any branch of this government while in the exercise of its constitutional duties, without assaulting the right of the body of the nation, which is the foundation of the whole polity.

In countries in which executive power is hereditary and clothed with high prerogatives, it may be struggling for liberty to strive to diminish its influence; but in this republic, in which the executive is elective, has no absolute authority in framing the laws, serves for a short period, is responsible, and has been created by the people, through the states, for their own purposes, it is assailing the rights of that people to attempt in any manner to impede its legal and just action.

*The American Democrat*, 1838

## 2. Aristocrat *vs.* Democrat

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

We live in an age when the words aristocrat and democrat are much used, without regard to the real significations. An aristocrat is one of a few, who possess the political power of a country; a democrat, one of the many. The words are also properly applied to those who entertain notions favorable to aristocratical or democratical forms of government. Such persons are not, necessarily, either aristocrats or democrats in fact, but merely so in opinion. Thus a member of a democratical government may have an aristocratical bias and *vice versa*.

To call a man who has the habits and opinions of a gentleman an aristocrat, from that fact alone, is an abuse of terms and betrays ignorance of the true principles of government, as well as of the world. It must be an equivocal freedom under which every one is not the master of his own innocent acts and associations, and he is a sneaking democrat, indeed, who will submit to be dictated to in those habits over which neither law nor morality assumes a right of control.

Some men fancy that a democrat can only be one who seeks the level, social, mental and moral, of the majority, a rule that would at once exclude all men of refinement, education, and taste from the class. These persons are enemies of democracy, as they at once render it impracticable. They are usually great sticklers for their own associations and habits, too, though unable to comprehend any of a nature that are superior. They are, in truth, aristocrats in principle, though assuming a contrary pretension; the ground work of all their feelings and arguments being self. Such is not the intention of liberty, whose aim is to leave every man to be the master of his own acts, denying hereditary honors, it is true, as unjust and unnecessary, but not denying the inevitable consequences of civilization. . . .

The democratic gentleman must differ in many essential particulars from the aristocratical gentleman, though in their ordinary habits and tastes they are virtually identical. Their principles vary, and, to a slight degree, their deportment accordingly. The democrat, recognizing the right of all to participate in power, will be more liberal in his general sentiments, a quality of superiority in itself; but, in conceding this much to his fellow man, he will proudly maintain his own independence of vulgar domination, as indispen-

sable to his personal habits. The same principles and manliness that would induce him to depose a royal despot would induce him to resist a vulgar tyrant.

There is no . . . more common error than to suppose him an aristocrat who maintains his independence of habits; for democracy asserts the control of the majority only in matters of law, and not in matters of custom. The very object of the institution is the utmost practicable personal liberty, and to affirm the contrary would be sacrificing the end to the means.

An aristocrat, therefore, is merely one who fortifies his exclusive privileges by positive institutions; and a democrat, one who is willing to admit of a free competition in all things. To say, however, that the last supposes this competition will lead to nothing, is an assumption that means are employed without any reference to an end. He is the purest democrat who best maintains his rights, and no rights can be dearer to a man of cultivation than exemptions from unseasonable invasions on his time by the coarse-minded and ignorant.

*The American Democrat, 1838*

### 3. Self-Reliance

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort and advancing on Chaos and the Dark.

What pretty oracles nature yields us on this text in the face and behavior of children, babes, and even brutes! That divided and rebel mind, that distrust of a sentiment because our arithmetic has computed the strength and means opposed to our purpose, these have not. Their mind being whole, their eye is as yet unconquered,

and when we look in their faces we are disconcerted. Infancy conforms to nobody; all conform to it; so that one babe commonly makes four or five out of the adults who prattle and play to it. So God has armed youth and puberty and manhood no less with its own piquancy and charm, and made it enviable and gracious and its claims not to be put by, if it will stand by itself. Do not think the youth has no force, because he cannot speak to you and me. Hark! in the next room his voice is sufficiently clear and emphatic. It seems he knows how to speak to his contemporaries. Bashful or bold then, he will know how to make us seniors very unnecessary.

The nonchalance of boys who are sure of a dinner, and would disdain as much as a lord to do or say aught to conciliate one, is the healthy attitude of human nature. A boy is in the parlor what the pit is in the playhouse; independent, irresponsible, looking out from his corner on such people and facts as pass by, he tries and sentences them on their merits, in the swift, summary way of boys, as good, bad, interesting, silly, eloquent, troublesome. He cumber himself never about consequences, about interests; he gives an independent, genuine verdict. You must court him; he does not court you. But the man is as it were clapped into jail by his consciousness. As soon as he has once acted or spoken with *éclat* he is a committed person, watched by the sympathy or the hatred of hundreds, whose affections must now enter into his account. There is no Lethe for this. Ah, that he could pass again into his neutrality! Who can thus avoid all pledges and, having observed, observe again from the same unaffected, unbiased, unbribable, unaffrighted innocence,—must always be formidable. He would utter opinions on all passing affairs, which being seen to be not private but necessary, would sink like darts into the ear of men and put them in fear.

These are the voices which we hear in solitude, but they grow faint and inaudible as we enter into the world. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

Whoso would be a man, must be a non-conformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind.

## 4. American Government

HENRY THOREAU

This American government,—what is it but a tradition, though a recent one, endeavoring to transmit itself unimpaired to posterity, but each instant losing some of its integrity? It has not the vitality and force of a single living man; for a single man can bend it to his will. It is a sort of wooden gun to the people themselves. But it is not the less necessary for this; for the people must have some complicated machinery or other, and hear its din, to satisfy that idea of government which they have. Governments show thus how successfully men can be imposed on, even impose on themselves, for their own advantage. It is excellent, we must all allow. Yet this government never of itself furthered any enterprise, but by the alacrity with which it got out of its way. *It* does not keep the country free. *It* does not settle the West. *It* does not educate. The character inherent in the American people has done all that has been accomplished; and it would have done somewhat more, if the government had not sometimes got in its way. For government is an expedient by which men would fain succeed in letting one another alone; and, as has been said, when it is most expedient, the governed are most let alone by it. Trade and commerce, if they were not made of India-rubber, would never manage to bounce over the obstacles which legislators are continually putting in their way; and, if one were to judge these men wholly by the effects of their actions and not partly by their intentions, they would deserve to be classed and punished with those mischievous persons who put obstructions on the railroads.

*Civil Disobedience*, 1849

## 5. Panacea for the Republic

HORACE MANN

The distinctive and substantial difference between a Republic and a Despotism, consists in the sovereignty or the subjection of the people composing them. There may be the form and theory of an arbitrary government, while the nominal possessors of power

feel constrained to yield continual deference to the popular voice. On the other hand, there may be a written constitution, and all the administrative forms of a free government, while a portion of the people are incapable of understanding a single one of all the momentous questions which are submitted to their decision; and who, therefore, are as much governed by others, in all the votes they give, in all the dogmas they take up, and in all the party watch-words they shout, as the subjects of the sternest despotism are governed by their hereditary masters. The means of government may be different, but the abjectness and servility of the governed are as real in the one case, as in the other; and the factionist or demagogue who inflames or wheedles, is as irresponsible as the lord who commands. Now, in a republic, the number, or proportion, of this class, who never think for themselves, and who therefore always act at the dictation of others; and who, as a necessary consequence, fall, by force of their own gravitation, into the hands of selfish and profligate men,—this number may go on increasing from year to year, until they become a majority of the whole; or, at least, until in all cases of emergency, they hold the balance of power, while the forms of the republic may remain unchanged,—nay, these very forms may be converted into a more efficient engine than ever before existed for wielding the selfish and irresponsible power which is the most execrable element in despotism itself. One after another, intelligent and conscientious men may drop out of the ranks, and their places be supplied by those whom ignorance and imbecility have prepared to become slaves, until, by a transition so gradual and stealthy, as to excite no alarm, the nominal republic may become an actual oligarchy,—a government of a select few,—not however, the selected best, but the selected worst.

There is no antidote or preventive against such a national catastrophe, but in the education of the whole people. But if the people do not improve the opportunities that exist, the fact of their existence will not avert the catastrophe. Viewed from this point, we catch a glimpse of the incalculable wrong committed by those parents and guardians who cause, or who tolerate, the absence of their children from school. Their conduct, indeed, seems inexplicable, on any hypothesis of human nature which does not deny to it the possession, both of reason and conscience. The schoolhouse has been erected and furnished, the books and apparatus have been provided, the teacher has been employed, the money for meeting all the expenses has been appropriated; and yet, at the very place and time where all these means have been brought together, and

where they are to be transmuted into knowledge, and morality, and happiness, and to be bestowed upon the children, those children turn away, as if disdainful to accept the boon.

*Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Education, 1845*

## 6. Letter to Horace Greeley

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

*Executive Mansion, Washington,*  
August 22, 1862.

HON. HORACE GREELEY.

*Dear Sir:* I have just read yours of the 19th, addressed to myself through the *New York Tribune*. If there be in it any statements or assumptions of fact which I may know to be erroneous, I do not, now and here, controvert them. If there be in it any inferences which I may believe to be falsely drawn, I do not, now and here, argue against them. If there be perceptible in it an impatient and dictatorial tone, I waive it in deference to an old friend whose heart I have always supposed to be right.

As to the policy I "seem to be pursuing," as you say, I have not meant to leave any one in doubt.

I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be "the Union it was." If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the coloured race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe

doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views.

I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free.

Yours,

A. LINCOLN

## 7. The Coach of Society

EDWARD BELLAMY

By way of attempting to give the reader some general impression of the way people lived together in those days, and especially of the relations of the rich and poor to one another, perhaps I cannot do better than to compare society as it then was to a prodigious coach which the masses of humanity were harnessed to and dragged toilsomely along a very hilly and sandy road. The driver was hunger, and permitted no lagging, though the pace was necessarily slow. Despite the difficulty of drawing the coach at all along so hard a road, the top was covered with passengers who never got down, even at the steepest ascents. These seats on top were very breezy and comfortable. Well up out of the dust, their occupants could enjoy the scenery at their leisure, or critically discuss the merits of the straining team. Naturally such places were in great demand and the competition for them was keen, every one seeking as the first end in life to secure a seat on the coach for himself and to leave it to his child after him. By the rule of the coach a man could leave his seat to whom he wished, but on the other hand there were many accidents by which it might at any time be wholly lost. For all that they were so easy, the seats were very insecure, and at every sudden jolt of the coach persons were slipping out of them and falling to the ground, where they were instantly compelled to take hold of the rope and help to drag the coach on which they had before ridden so pleasantly. It was naturally regarded as a terrible misfortune to lose one's seat, and the apprehension that this might happen to them or their friends was a constant cloud upon the happiness of those who rode.

But did they think only of themselves? you ask. Was not their

very luxury rendered intolerable to them by comparison with the lot of their brothers and sisters in the harness, and the knowledge that their own weight added to their toil? Had they no compassion for fellow beings from whom fortune only distinguished them? Oh, yes; commiseration was frequently expressed by those who rode for those who had to pull the coach, especially when the vehicle came to a bad place in the road, as it was constantly doing, or to a particularly steep hill. At such times, the desperate straining of the team, their agonized leaping and plunging under the pitiless lashing of hunger, the many who fainted at the rope and were trampled in the mire, made a very distressing spectacle, which often called forth highly creditable displays of feeling on the top of the coach. At such times the passengers would call down encouragingly to the toilers of the rope, exhorting them to patience, and holding out hopes of possible compensation in another world for the hardness of their lot, while others contributed to buy salves and liniments for the crippled and injured. It was agreed that it was a great pity that the coach should be so hard to pull, and there was a sense of general relief when the specially bad piece of road was gotten over. This relief was not, indeed, wholly on account of the team, for there was always some danger at these bad places of a general overturn in which all would lose their seats.

*Looking Backward*, 1887

## 8. The Class Struggle

JACK LONDON

Unfortunately or otherwise, people are prone to believe in the reality of the things they think ought to be so. This comes of the cheery optimism which is innate with life itself; and, while it may sometimes be deplored, it must never be censured, for, as a rule, it is productive of more good than harm, and of about all the achievement there is in the world. There are cases where this optimism has been disastrous, as with the people who lived in Pompeii during its last quivering days; or with the aristocrats of the time of Louis XVI, who confidently expected the Deluge to overwhelm their children, or their children's children, but never themselves. But there is small likelihood that the case of perverse optimism here to be considered will end in such disaster, while there is every reason to believe that

the great change will be as peaceful and orderly in its culmination as it is in its present development.

Out of their constitutional optimism, and because a class struggle is an abhorred and dangerous thing, the great American people are unanimous in asserting that there is no class struggle. And by "American people" is meant the recognized and authoritative mouth-pieces of the American people, which are the press, the pulpit, and the university. The journalists, the preachers, and the professors are practically of one voice in declaring that there is no such thing as a class struggle now going on, much less that a class struggle will ever go on, in the United States. And this declaration they continually make in the face of a multitude of facts which impeach, not so much their sincerity, as affirm, rather, their optimism.

There are two ways of approaching the subject of the class struggle. The existence of this struggle can be shown theoretically, and it can be shown actually. For a class struggle to exist in society there must be a superior class and an inferior class (as measured by power); and, second, the outlets must be closed whereby the strength and ferment of the inferior class have been permitted to escape.

That there are even classes in the United States is vigorously denied by many; but it is incontrovertible, when a group of individuals is formed, wherein the members are bound together by common interests which are peculiarly their interests and not the interests of individuals outside the group, that such a group is a class. The owners of capital, with their dependents, form a class of this nature in the United States; the working people form a similar class. The interest of the capitalist class, say, in the matter of income tax, is quite contrary to the interest of the laboring class; and, *vice versa*, in the matter of poll-tax.

If between these two classes there be a clear and vital conflict of interest, all the factors are present which make a class struggle; but this struggle will lie dormant if the strong and capable members of the inferior class be permitted to leave that class and join the ranks of the superior class. The capitalist class and the working class have existed side by side and for a long time in the United States; but hitherto all the strong, energetic members of the working class have been able to rise out of their class and become owners of capital. They were enabled to do this because an undeveloped country with an expanding frontier gave equality of opportunity to all. In the almost lottery-like scramble for the ownership of vast unowned natural resources, and in the exploitation of which there

was little or no competition of capital, (the capital itself rising out of the exploitation), the capable, intelligent member of the working class found a field in which to use his brains to his own advancement. Instead of being discontented in direct ratio with his intelligence and ambitions, and of radiating amongst his fellows a spirit of revolt as capable as he is capable, he left them to their fate and carved his own way to a place in the superior class.

But the day of an expanding frontier, of a lottery-like scramble for the ownership of natural resources, and of the upbuilding of new industries, is past. Farthest West has been reached, and an immense volume of surplus capital roams for investment and nips in the bud the patient efforts of the embryo capitalist to rise through slow increment from small beginnings. The gateway of opportunity after opportunity has been closed, and closed for all time. Rockefeller has shut the door on oil, the American Tobacco Company on tobacco, and Carnegie on steel. After Carnegie came Morgan, who triple-locked the door. These doors will not open again, and before them pause thousands of ambitious young men to read the placard: NO THOROUGHFARE.

And day by day more doors are shut, while the ambitious young men continue to be born. It is they, denied the opportunity to rise from the working class, who preach revolt to the working class. Had he been born fifty years later, Andrew Carnegie, the poor Scotch boy, might have risen to be president of his union, or of a federation of unions; but that he would never have become the builder of Homestead, and the founder of multitudinous libraries, is as certain as it is certain that some other man would have developed the steel industry had Andrew Carnegie never been born.

Theoretically, then, there exist in the United States all the factors which go to make a class struggle. There are the capitalists and working classes, the interests of which conflict, while the working class is no longer being emasculated to the extent it was in the past by having drawn off from it its best blood and brains. Its more capable members are no longer able to rise out of it and leave the great mass leaderless and helpless. They remain to be its leaders.

*The War of the Classes, 1905*

## 9. Le Contrat Social

H. L. MENCKEN

All government, in its essence, is a conspiracy against the superior man: its one permanent object is to police him and cripple him. If it be aristocratic in organization, then it seeks to protect the man who is superior only in law against the man who is superior in fact; if it be democratic, then it seeks to protect the man who is inferior in every way against both. Thus one of its primary functions is to regiment men by force, to make them as much alike as possible and as dependent upon one another as possible, to search out and combat originality among them. All it can see in an original idea is potential change, and hence an invasion of its prerogatives. The most dangerous man, to any government, is the man who is able to think things out for himself, without regard to the prevailing superstitions and taboos. Almost inevitably he comes to the conclusion that the government he lives under is dishonest, insane and intolerable, and so, if he is romantic, he tries to change it. And even if he is not romantic personally he is very apt to spread discontent among those who are. Ludwig van Beethoven was certainly no politician. Nor was he a patriot. Nor had he any democratic illusions in him: he held the Viennese in even more contempt than he held the Hapsburgs. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the sharp criticism of the Hapsburg government that he used to loose in the cafés of Vienna had its effects—that some of his ideas of 1818, after a century of germination, got themselves translated into acts in 1918. Beethoven, like all other first-rate men, greatly disliked the government he lived under. I add the names of Goethe, Heine, Wagner and Nietzsche, to keep among Germans. That of Bismarck might follow: he admired the Hohenzollern idea, as Carlyle did, not the German people or the German administration. In his "Erinnerungen," whenever he discusses the government that he was a part of, he has difficulty keeping his contempt within the bounds of decorum.

Nine times out of ten, it seems to me, the man who proposes a change in the government he lives under, no matter how defective it may be, is romantic to the verge of sentimentality. There is seldom, if ever, any evidence that the kind of government he is unlawfully inclined to would be any better than the government he proposes to supplant. Political revolutions, in truth, do not often accomplish

anything of genuine value; their one undoubted effect is simply to throw out one gang of thieves and put in another. After a revolution, of course, the successful revolutionists always try to convince doubters that they have achieved great things, and usually they hang any man who denies it. But that surely doesn't prove their case. In Russia, for many years, the plain people were taught that getting rid of the Czar would make them all rich and happy, but now that they have got rid of him they are poorer and unhappier than ever before. The Germans, with the Kaiser in exile, have discovered that a shoemaker turned statesman is ten times as bad as a Hohenzollern. The Alsatians, having become Frenchmen again after 48 years anxious wait, have responded to the boon by becoming extravagant Germano-maniacs. The Tyrolese, though they hated the Austrians, now hate the Italians enormously more. The Irish, having rid themselves of the English after 700 years of struggle, instantly discovered that government by Englishmen, compared to government by Irishmen, was almost paradisiacal. Even the American colonies gained little by their revolt in 1776. For twenty-five years after the Revolution they were in far worse conditions as free states than they would have been as colonies. Their government was more expensive, more inefficient, more dishonest, and more tyrannical. It was only the gradual material progress of the country that saved them from starvation and collapse, and that material progress was due, not to the virtues of their new government, but to the lavishness of nature. Under the British hoof they would have got on just as well, and probably a great deal better.

The ideal government of all reflective men, from Aristotle to Herbert Spencer, is one which lets the individual alone—one which barely escapes being no government at all. This ideal, I believe, will be realized in the world twenty or thirty centuries after I have passed from these scenes and taken up my home in Hell.

*Prejudices: Third Series, 1922*

## 10. America for Humanity

WOODROW WILSON

I like to image in my thought this ideal. These quiet ships lying in the river have no suggestion of bluster about them—no intimation of aggression. They are commanded by men thoughtful of

the duty of citizens as well as the duty of officers—men acquainted with the traditions of the great service to which they belong—men who know by touch with the people of the United States what sort of purposes they ought to entertain and what sort of discretion they ought to exercise, in order to use those engines of force as engines to promote the interests of humanity.

The mission of America is the only thing that a sailor or soldier should think about: he has nothing to do with the formulation of her policy; he is to support her policy, whatever it is—but he is to support her policy in the spirit of herself, and the strength of our policy is that we, who for the time being administer the affairs of this nation, do not originate her spirit; we attempt to embody it; we attempt to realize it in action; we are dominated by it, we do not dictate it.

And so with every man in arms who serves the nation—he stands and waits to do the thing which the nation desires. America sometimes seems perhaps to forget her programs, or, rather, I would say that sometimes those who represent her seem to forget her programs, but the people never forget them. It is as startling as it is touching to see how whenever you touch a principle you touch the hearts of the people of the United States. They listen to your debates of policy, they determine which party they will prefer to power, they choose and prefer as ordinary men; but their real affection, their real force, their real irresistible momentum, is for the ideas, which men embody.

*The Forum of Democracy, 1917*

## 11. Private Leslie Yawfitz

WILLIAM MARCH

After supper I clear the table and wash the dishes, while my sister sits in a chair and tells me about her work at the office, or reads the morning paper out loud. One night she came on an item about the French Academy honoring the German scientist, Einstein, and conferring some sort of an honorary degree upon him. There were a lot of speeches made about the healing of old wounds, hands across the border, mutual trust and confidence, misunderstanding, etc. There was a picture of the ceremony, and my sister described that also.

"If it was a mistake and a misunderstanding all the way round, what was the sense of fighting at all?" I asked. I put down the dish cloth and felt my way to the table.

My sister sighed, as if she were very tired, but she did not answer me.

"Since they're all apologizing and being so God-damned polite to each other," I continued, "I think somebody should write me a note on pink stationery as follows: 'Dear Mr. Yawfitz: Please pardon us for having shot out your eyes. It was all a mistake. Do you mind awfully?'"

"Don't get bitter again, Leslie," said my sister.

"I know," I said. "I know."

"Don't get bitter again, Leslie. Please don't get bitter."

Then I went back to the sink and finished wiping the dishes.

*Company K, 1933*

## 12. Unemployed: 2 A.M.

S. FUNAROFF

The park lamp in reverie.

The nervous leaves rustle in palegreen light.

Here on a bench an old woman is sleeping.  
Her head droops limp against her breast  
rising and falling like the bow of the fountain  
all night long whisperweeping:  
sleep                      sleep.

And the men with bared feet in the grass:—  
their tired, heavy bodies hug the earth;  
they mutter strange words in far away voices.  
The cool soft grass is soothing:  
hush ah hush.

The waterfront nearby smells like a black restless wind.  
A horn uneasy calling moans far off—  
outcries of unrest in a dream.

*The Spider and the Clock, 1938*

## 13. I Am the People, the Mob

CARL SANDBURG

I AM the people—the mob—the crowd—the mass.

Do you know that all the great work of the world is done through me?

I am the workingman, the inventor, the maker of the world's food and clothes.

I am the audience that witnesses history. The Napoleons come from me and the Lincolns. They die. And then I send forth more Napoleons and Lincolns.

I am the seed ground. I am a prairie that will stand for much plowing. Terrible storms pass over me. I forget. The best of me is sucked out and wasted. I forget. Everything but Death comes to me and makes me work and give up what I have. And I forget.

Sometimes I growl, shake myself and spatter a few red drops for history to remember. Then—I forget.

When I, the People, learn to remember, when I, the People, use the lessons of yesterday and no longer forget who robbed me last year, who played me for a fool—then there will be no speaker in all the world say the name: "The People," with any fleck of a sneer in his voice or any far-off smile of derision.

The mob—the crowd—the mass—will arrive then.

*Chicago Poems, 1916*

## 14. A Tall Man

CARL SANDBURG

The mouth of this man is a gaunt strong mouth.

The head of this man is a gaunt strong head.

The jaws of this man are bone of the Rocky Mountains, the Appalachians.

The eyes of this man are chlorine of two sobbing oceans,

Foam, salt, green, wind, the changing unknown.

The neck of this man is pith of buffalo prairie, old longing and new beckoning of corn belt or cotton belt,

Either a proud Sequoia trunk of the wilderness  
Or huddling lumber of a sawmill waiting to be a roof.

Brother mystery to man and mob mystery,  
Brother cryptic to lifted cryptic hands,  
He is night and abyss, he is white sky of sun, he is the head of the  
people.  
The heart of him the red drops of the people,  
The wish of him the steady gray-eagle crag-hunting flights of the  
people.

Humble dust of a wheel-worn road,  
Slashed sod under the iron-shining plow,  
These of service in him, these and many cities, many borders, many  
wrangles between Alaska and the Isthmus, between the Isthmus  
and the Horn, and east and west of Omaha, and east and west  
of Paris, Berlin, Petrograd.

The blood in his right wrist and the blood in his left wrist run  
with the right wrist wisdom of the many and the left wrist  
wisdom of the many.  
It is the many he knows, the gaunt strong hunger of the many.

*Cornhuskers, 1918*

# The Fortune of the Republic

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

I

It is a rule that holds in economy as well as in hydraulics that you must have a source higher than your tap. The mills, the shops, the theatre and the caucus, the college and the church, have all found out this secret. The sailors sail by chronometers that do not lose two or three seconds in a year, ever since Newton explained to Parliament that the way to improve navigation was to get good watches, and to offer public premiums for a better time-keeper than any then in use. The manufacturers rely on turbines of hydraulic perfection; the carpet-mill, on mordants and dyes which exhaust the skill of the chemist; the calico print, on designers of genius who draw the wages of artists, not of artisans. Wedgwood, the eminent potter, bravely took the sculptor Flaxman to counsel, who said, "Send to Italy, search the museums for the forms of old Etruscan vases, urns, waterpots, domestic and sacrificial vessels of all kinds." They built great works and called their manufacturing village Etruria. Flaxman, with his Greek taste, selected and combined the loveliest forms, which were executed in English clay; sent boxes of these gifts to every court of Europe, and formed the taste of the world. It was a renaissance of the breakfast-table and china-closet. The brave manufacturers made their fortune. The jewellers imitated the revived models in silver and gold.

The theatre avails itself of the best talent of poet, of painter, and of amateur of taste, to make the ensemble of dramatic effect. The marine insurance office has its mathematical counsellor to settle averages; the life-assurance, its table of annuities. The wine-merchant has his analyst and taster, the more exquisite the better. He has also, I fear, his debts to the chemist as well as to the vineyard.

Our modern wealth stands on a few staples, and the interest nations took in our war was exasperated by the importance of the cotton trade. And what is cotton? One plant out of some two hundred thousand known to the botanist, vastly the larger part of which are reckoned weeds. What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered,—every one of the two hundred thousand probably yet to be of utility in the arts. As Bacchus of the vine,

Ceres of the wheat, as Arkwright and Whitney were the demi-gods of cotton, so prolific Time will yet bring an inventor to every plant. There is not a property in Nature but a mind is born to seek and find it. For it is not the plants or the animals, innumerable as they are, nor the whole magazine of material nature that can give the sum of power, but the infinite applicability of these things in the hands of thinking man, every new application being equivalent to a new material. . . .

Now, if this is true in all the useful and in the fine arts, that the direction must be drawn from a superior source or there will be no good work, does it hold less in our social and civil life?

In our popular politics you may note that each aspirant who rises above the crowd, however at first making his obedient apprenticeship in party tactics, if he have sagacity, soon learns that it is by no means by obeying the vulgar weathercock of his party, the resentments, the fears and whims of it, that real power is gained, but that he must often face and resist the party, and abide by his resistance, and put them in fear; that the only title to their permanent respect, and to a larger following, is to see for himself what is the real public interest, and to stand for that;—that is a principle, and all the cheering and hissing of the crowd must by and by accommodate itself to it. Our times easily afford you very good examples. . . .

At every moment some one country more than any other represents the sentiment and the future of mankind. None will doubt that America occupies this place in the opinion of nations, as is proved by the fact of the vast immigration into this country from all the nations of Western and Central Europe. And when the adventurers have planted themselves and looked about, they send back all the money they can spare to bring their friends.

Meantime they find this country just passing through a great crisis in its history, as necessary as lactation or dentition or puberty to the human individual. We are in these days settling for ourselves and our descendants questions which, as they shall be determined in one way or the other, will make the peace and prosperity or the calamity of the next ages. The questions of Education, of Society, of Labor, the direction of talent, of character, the nature and habits of the American, may well occupy us, and more the question of Religion.

The new conditions of mankind in America are really favorable to progress, the removal of absurd restrictions and antique inequalities. The mind is always better the more it is used, and here it is

kept in practice. The humblest is daily challenged to give his opinion on practical questions, and while civil and social freedom exists, nonsense even has a favorable effect. Cant is good to provoke common sense. . . . The trance-mediums, the rebel paradoxes, exasperate the common sense. The wilder the paradox, the more sure is Punch to put it in the pillory.

The lodging the power in the people, as in republican forms, has the effect of holding things closer to common sense; for a court or an aristocracy, which must always be a small minority, can more easily run into follies than a republic, which has too many observers—each with a vote in his hand—to allow its head to be turned by any kind of nonsense: since hunger, thirst, cold, the cries of children and debt are always holding the masses hard to the essential duties.

## II

One hundred years ago the American people attempted to carry out the bill of political rights to an almost ideal perfection. They have made great strides in that direction since. They are now proceeding, instructed by their success and by their many failures, to carry out, not the bill of rights, but the bill of human duties.

And look what revolution that attempt involves. Hitherto government has been that of the single person or of the aristocracy. In this country the attempt to resist these elements, it is asserted, must throw us into the government not quite of mobs, but in practice of an inferior class of professional politicians, who by means of newspapers and caucuses really thrust their unworthy minority into the place of the old aristocracy on the one side, and of the good, industrious, well-taught but unambitious population on the other, win the posts of power and give their direction to affairs. Hence liberal congresses and legislature ordain, to the surprise of the people, equivocal, interested and vicious measures. The men themselves are suspected and charged with lobbying and being lobbied. No measure is attempted for itself, but the opinion of the people is courted in the first place, and the measures are perfunctorily carried through as secondary. We do not choose our own candidate, no, nor any other man's first choice,—but only the available candidate, whom, perhaps, no man loves. We do not speak what we think, but grope after the practicable and available. Instead of character, there is a studious exclusion of character. The people are feared and flattered. They are not reprimanded. The country is governed in bar-rooms. The low can best win the low, and each

aspirant for power vies with his rival which can stoop lowest, and depart widest from himself. . . .

The spirit of our political economy is low and degrading. The precious metals are not so precious as they are esteemed. Man exists for his own sake, and not to add a laborer to the state. The spirit of our political action, for the most part, considers nothing less than the sacredness of man. Party sacrifices man to the measure.

We have seen the great party of property and education in the country drivelling and huckstering away, for views of party fear or advantage, every principle of humanity and the dearest hopes of mankind; the trustees of power only energetic when mischief could be done, imbecile as corpses when evil was to be prevented.

Our great men succumb so far to the forms of the day as to peril their integrity for the sake of adding to the weight of their personal character the authority of office, or making a real government titular. Our politics are full of adventurers, who having by education and social innocence a good repute in the state, break away from the law of honesty and think they can afford to join the devil's party. 'Tis odious, these offenders in high life. You rally to the support of old charities and the cause of literature, and there, to be sure, are these brazen faces. In this innocence you are puzzled how to meet them; must shake hands with them, under protest. We feel toward them as the minister about the Cape Cod farm,—in the old time when the minister was still invited, in the spring, to make a prayer for the blessing of a piece of land,—the good pastor being brought to the spot, stopped short: "No, this land does not want a prayer, this land wants manure."

'Tis virtue which they want, and wanting it,  
Honor no garment to their backs can fit.

Parties keep the old names, but exhibit a surprising fugacity in creeping out of one snake-skin into another of equal ignominy and lubricity, and the grasshopper on the turret of Faneuil Hall gives a proper hint of the men below.

Everything yields. The very glaciers are viscous, or relegate into conformity, and the stiffest patriots falter and compromise; so that will cannot be depended on to save us.

How rare are acts of will! We are all living according to custom; we do as other people do, and shrink from an act of our own. Every such act makes a man famous, and we can all count the few cases—half a dozen in our time—when a public man ventured to

act as he thought without waiting for orders or for public opinion. John Quincy Adams was a man of an audacious independence that always kept the public curiosity alive in regard to what he might do. None could predict his word, and a whole congress could not gainsay it when it was spoken. General Jackson was a man of will, and his phrase on one memorable occasion, "I will take the responsibility," is a proverb ever since.

The American marches with a careless swagger to the height of power, very heedless of his own liberty or of other peoples', in his reckless confidence that he can have all he wants, risking all the prized charters of the human race, bought with battles and revolutions and religion, gambling them all away for a paltry selfish gain.

He sits secure in the possession of his vast domain, rich beyond all experience in resources, sees its inevitable force unlocking itself in elemental order day by day, year by year; looks from his coal-fields, his wheat-bearing prairie, his gold-mines, to his two oceans on either side, and feels the security that there can be no famine in a country reaching through so many latitudes, no want that cannot be supplied, no danger from any excess of importation of art or learning into a country of such native strength, such immense digestive power.

In proportion to the personal ability of each man, he feels the invitation and career which the country opens to him. He is easily fed with wheat and game, with Ohio wine, but his brain is also pampered by finer draughts, by political power and by the power in the railroad board, in the mills, or the banks. This elevates his spirits, and gives, of course, an easy self-reliance that makes him self-willed and unscrupulous.

I think this levity is a reaction on the people from the extraordinary advantages and invitations of their condition. When we are most disturbed by their rash and immoral voting, it is not malignity, but recklessness. They are careless of politics, because they do not entertain the possibility of being seriously caught in meshes of legislation. They feel strong and irresistible. They believe that what they have enacted they can repeal if they do not like it. But one may run a risk once too often. They stay away from the polls, saying that one vote can do no good! Or they take another step, and say "One vote can do no harm!" and vote for something which they do not approve, because their party or set votes for it. Of course this puts them in the power of any party having a steady interest to promote which does not conflict manifestly with the pecuniary interest of the voters. But if they should come to be interested in

themselves and in their career, they would no more stay away from the election than from their own counting-room or the house of their friend.

The people are right-minded enough on ethical questions, but they must pay their debts, and must have the means of living well, and not pinching. So it is useless to rely on them to go to a meeting, or to give a vote, if any check from this must-have-the-money side arises. If a customer looks grave at their newspaper, or damns their member of Congress, they take another newspaper, and vote for another man. They must have money, for a certain style of living fast becomes necessary; they must take wine at the hotel, first, for the look of it, and second, for the purpose of sending the bottle to two or three gentlemen at the table; and presently because they have got the taste, and do not feel that they have dined without it.

The record of the election now and then alarms people by the all but unanimous choice of a rogue and a brawler. But how was it done? What lawless mob burst into the polls and threw in these hundreds of ballots in defiance of the magistrates? This was done by the very men you know,—the mildest, most sensible, best-natured people. The only account of this is, that they have been scared or warped into some association in their mind of the candidate with the interest of their trade or of their property.

Whilst each cabal urges its candidate, and at last brings, with cheers and street demonstrations, men whose names are a knell to all hope of progress, the good and wise are hidden in their active retirements, and are quite out of question.

These we must join to wake, for these are of the strain  
That justice dare defend, and will the age maintain.

Yet we know, all over this country, men of integrity, capable of action and of affairs, with the deepest sympathy in all that concerns the public, mortified by the national disgrace, and quite capable of any sacrifice except of their honor.

### III

Faults in the working appear in our system, as in all, but they suggest their own remedies. After every practical mistake out of which any disaster grows, the people wake and correct it with energy. And any disturbances in politics, in civil or foreign wars, sober them, and instantly show more virtue and conviction in the

popular vote. In each new threat of faction the ballot has been, beyond expectation, right decisive.

It is ever an inspiration, God only knows whence; a sudden, undated perception of eternal right coming into and correcting things that were wrong; a perception that passes through thousands as readily as through one.

The gracious lesson taught by science to this country is that the history of Nature from first to last is incessant advance from less to more, from rude to finer organization, the globe of matter thus conspiring with the principle of undying hope in man. Nature works in immense time, and spends individuals and races prodigally to prepare new individuals and races. The lower kinds are one after one extinguished; the higher forms come in. The history of civilization, or the refining of certain races to wonderful power of performance, is analogous; but the best civilization yet is only valuable as a ground of hope.

Ours is the country of poor men. Here is practical democracy; here is the human race poured out over the continent to do itself justice; all mankind in its shirtsleeves; not grimacing like poor rich men in cities, pretending to be rich, but unmistakably taking off its coat to hard work, when labor is sure to pay. This through all the country. For really, though you see wealth in the capitals, it is only a sprinkling of rich men in the cities and at sparse points; the bulk of the population is poor. In Maine, nearly every man is a lumberer. In Massachusetts, every twelfth man is a shoemaker, and the rest, millers, farmers, sailors, fishermen.

Well, the result is, instead of the doleful experience of the European economist, who tells us, "In almost all countries the condition of the great body of the people is poor and miserable," here that same great body has arrived at a sloven plenty,—ham and corn-cakes, tight roof and coals enough have been attained; an unbuttoned comfort, not clean, not thoughtful, far from polished, without dignity in his repose; the man awkward and restless if he have not something to do, but honest and kind for the most part, understanding his own rights and stiff to maintain them, and disposed to give his children a better education than he received.

The steady improvement of the public schools in the cities and the country enables the farmer or laborer to secure a precious primary education. It is rare to find a born American who cannot read and write. The facility with which clubs are formed by young men for discussion of social, political and intellectual topics secures the notoriety of the questions.

Our institutions, of which the town is the unit, are all educational, for responsibility educates fast. The town-meeting is, after the high-school, a higher school. The legislature, to which every good farmer goes once on trial, is a superior academy.

The result appears in the power of invention, the freedom of thinking, in the readiness for reforms, eagerness for novelty, even for all the follies of false science; in the antipathy to secret societies, in the predominance of the democratic party in the politics of the Union, and in the voice of the public even when irregular and vicious,—the voice of mobs, the voice of lynch law,—because it is thought to be, on the whole, the verdict, though badly spoken, of the greatest number.

All this forwardness and self-reliance, cover self-government; proceed on the belief that as the people have made a government they can make another; that their union and law are not in their memory, but in their blood and condition. If they unmake a law, they can easily make a new one. In Mr. Webster's imagination the American Union was a huge Prince Rupert's drop, which will snap into atoms if so much as the smallest end be shivered off. Now the fact is quite different from this.

. . .  
We began with freedom, and are defended from shocks now for a century by the facility with which through popular assemblies every necessary measure of reform can instantly be carried. A congress is a standing insurrection, and escapes the violence of accumulated grievance. As the globe keeps its identity by perpetual change, so our civil system, by perpetual appeal to the people and acceptance of its reforms. . . .

The men, the women, all over this land shrill their exclamations of impatience and indignation at what is short-coming or is unbecoming in the government,—at the want of humanity, of morality,—ever on broad grounds of general justice, and not on the class-feeling which narrows the perception of English, French, German people at home.

In this fact, that we are a nation of individuals, that we have a highly intellectual organization, that we can see and feel moral distinctions, and that on such an organization sooner or later the moral laws must tell, to such ears must speak,—in this is our hope. For if the prosperity of this country has been merely the obedience of man to the guiding of Nature,—of great rivers and prairies,—yet is there fate above fate, if we choose to spread this language; or if there is fate in corn and cotton, so is there fate in thought,—

this, namely, that the largest thought and the widest love are born to victory, and must prevail.

The revolution is the work of no man, but the eternal effervescence of Nature. It never did not work. And we say that revolutions beat all the insurgents, be they never so determined and politic; that the great interests of mankind, being at every moment through ages in favor of justice and the largest liberty, will always, from time to time, gain on the adversary and at last win the day. Never country had such a fortune, as men call fortune, as this, in its geography, its history, and in its majestic possibilities.

We have much to learn, much to correct,—a great deal of lying vanity. The spread eagle must fold his foolish wings and be less of a peacock; must keep his wings to carry the thunderbolt when he is commanded. We must realize our rhetoric and our rituals. Our national flag is not affecting, as it should be, because it does not represent the population of the United States, but some Baltimore or Chicago or Cincinnati or Philadelphia caucus; not union or justice, but selfishness and cunning. If we never put on the liberty-cap until we were freemen by love and self-denial, the liberty-cap would mean something. I wish to see America not like the old powers of the earth, grasping, exclusive and narrow, but a benefactor such as no country ever was, hospitable to all nations, legislating for all nationalities. Nations were made to help each other as much as families were; and all advancement is by ideas, and not by brute force or mechanic force.

In this country, with our practical understanding, there is, at present, a great sensualism, a headlong devotion to trade and to the conquest of the continent,—to each man as large a share of the same as he can carve for himself,—an extravagant confidence in our talent and activity, which becomes, whilst successful, a scornful materialism,—but with the fault, of course, that it has no depth, no reserved force whereon to fall back when a reverse comes.

That repose which is the ornament and ripeness of man is not American. That repose which indicates a faith in the laws of the universe,—a faith that they will fulfil themselves, and are not to be impeded, transgressed or accelerated. Our people are too slight and vain. They are easily elated and easily depressed. See how fast they extend the fleeting fabric of their trade,—not at all considering the remote reaction and bankruptcy, but with the same abandonment to the moment and the facts of the hour as the Esquimau who sells his bed in the morning. Our people act on the moment, and from external impulse. They all lean on some other, and this super-

stitiously, and not from insight of his merit. They follow a fact; they follow success, and not skill. Therefore, as soon as the success stops and admirable man blunders, they quit him; already they remember that they long ago suspected his judgment, and they transfer the repute of judgment to the next prosperous person who has not yet blundered. Of course this levity makes them as easily despond. It seems as if history gave no account of any society in which despondency came so readily to heart as we see it and feel it in ours. Young men at thirty and even earlier lose all spring and vivacity, and if they fail in their first enterprise throw up the game.

The source of mischief is the extreme difficulty with which men are roused from the torpor of every day. Blessed is all that agitates the mass, breaks up this torpor, and begins motion. *Corpora non agunt nisi soluta*; the chemical rule is true in mind. Contrast, change, interruption, are necessary to new activity and new combinations.

#### IV

If a temperate wise man should look over our American society, I think the first danger that would excite his alarm would be the European influences on this country. We buy much of Europe which does not make us better men, and mainly the expensiveness which is ruining the country. We import trifles, dances, singers, laces, books of patterns, modes, gloves and cologne, manuals of Gothic architecture, steam-made ornaments. America is provincial. It is an immense Halifax. See the secondariness and aping of foreign . . . life that runs through this country in building, in dress, in eating, in books. Every village, every city has its architecture, its costume, its hotel, its private house, its church from England.

Let the passion for America cast out the passion for Europe. Here let there be what the earth waits for,—exalted manhood. What this country longs for is personalities, grand persons, to counteract its materialities. For it is the rule of the universe that corn shall serve man, and not man corn.

They who find America insipid,—they for whom London and Paris have spoiled their own homes, can be spared to return to those cities. I not only see a career at home for more genius than we have, but for more than there is in the world. . . .

Our young men lack idealism. A man for success must not be pure idealist, then he will practically fail; but he must have ideas, must obey ideas, or he might as well be the horse he rides on. A man

does not want to be sun-dazzled, sun-blind; but every man must have glimmer enough to keep him from knocking his head against the walls. And it is in the interest of civilization and good society and friendship, that I dread to hear of well-born, gifted and amiable men, that they have this indifference, disposing them to this despair.

Of no use are the men who study to do exactly as was done before, who can never understand that to-day is a new day. There never was such a combination as this of ours, and the rules to meet it are not set down in any history. We want men of original perception and original action, who can open their eyes wider than to a nationality,—namely, to considerations of benefit to the human race,—can act in the interest of civilization; men of elastic, men of moral mind, who can live in the moment and take a step forward. Columbus was no backward-creeping crab, nor was Martin Luther, nor John Adams, nor Patrick Henry, nor Thomas Jefferson; and the Genius or Destiny of America is no log or sluggard, but a man incessantly advancing, as the shadow on the dial's face, or the heavenly body by whose light it is marked.

The flowering of civilization is the finished man, the man of sense, of grace, of accomplishment, of social power,—the gentleman. What hinders that he be born here? The new times need a new man, the complemental man, whom plainly this country must furnish. Freer swing his arms; farther pierce his eyes; more forward and forthright his whole build and rig than an Englishman's, who, we see, is much imprisoned in his backbone.

'Tis certain that our civilization is yet incomplete; it has not ended or given sign of sending in a hero. 'Tis a wild democracy; the riot of mediocrities and dishonesties and fudges. Ours is the age of the omnibus, of the third person plural, of Tammany Hall. Is it that Nature has only so much vital force and must dilute it if it is to be multiplied into millions? The beautiful is never plentiful. Then Illinois and Indiana, with their spawning loins, must needs be ordinary.

v

It is not a question whether we shall be a multitude of people. No, that has been conspicuously decided already; but whether we shall be the new nation, the guide and lawgiver of all nations, as having clearly chosen and firmly held the simplest and best rule of political society. . . .

It is not possible to extricate yourself from the questions in which

your age is involved. Let the good citizen perform the duties put on him here and now. It is not by heads reverted to the dying Demosthenes, or to Luther, or to Wallace, or to George Fox, or to George Washington, that you can combat the dangers and dragons that beset the United States at this time. I believe this cannot be accomplished by dunces or idlers, but requires docility, sympathy, and religious receiving from higher principles; for liberty, like religion, is a short and hasty fruit, and like all power subsists only by new rallyings on the source of inspiration.

Power can be generous. The very grandeur of the means which offer themselves to us should suggest grandeur in the direction of our expenditure. If our mechanic arts are unsurpassed in usefulness, if we have taught the river to make shoes and nails and carpets, and the bolt of heaven to write our letters like a Gillot pen, let these wonders work for honest humanity, for the poor, for justice, genius and the public good. Let us realize that this country, the last found, is the great charity of God to the human race.

America should affirm and establish that in no instance shall the guns go in advance of the present right. We shall not make *coups d'état* and afterwards explain and pay, but shall proceed like William Penn, or whatever other Christian or humane person who treats with the Indian or the foreigner, on principles of honest trade and mutual advantage. We can see that the Constitution and the law in America must be written on ethical principles, so that the entire power of the spiritual world shall hold the citizen loyal, and repel the enemy as by force of nature. It should be mankind's bill of rights, or Royal Proclamation of the Intellect ascending the throne, announcing its good pleasure that now, once for all, the world shall be governed by common sense and law of morals.

The end of all political struggle is to establish morality as the basis of all legislation. 'Tis not free institutions, 'tis not a democracy that is the end,—no, but only the means. Morality is the object of government. We want a state of things in which crime will not pay; a state of things which allows every man the largest liberty compatible with the liberty of every other man.

Humanity asks that government shall not be ashamed to be tender and paternal, but that democratic institutions shall be more thoughtful for the interests of women, for the training of children, and for the welfare of sick and unable persons, and serious care of criminals, than was ever any the best government of the Old World.

The genius of the country has marked out our true policy,—

opportunity. Opportunity of civil rights, of education, of personal power, and not less of wealth; doors wide open. If I could have it,—free trade with all the world without toll or custom-houses, invitation as we now make to every nation, to every race and skin, white men, red men, yellow men, black men; hospitality of fair field and equal laws to all. Let them compete, and success to the strongest, the wisest and the best. The land is wide enough, the soil has bread for all.

I hope America will come to have its pride in being a nation of servants, and not of the served. How can men have any other ambition where the reason has not suffered a disastrous eclipse? Whilst every man can say I serve,—to the whole extent of my being I apply my faculty to the service of mankind in my especial place,—he therein sees and shows a reason for his being in the world, and is not a moth or incumbrance in it.

The distinction and end of a soundly constituted man is his labor. Use is inscribed on all his faculties. Use is the end to which he exists. As the tree exists for its fruit, so a man for his work. A fruitless plant, an idle animal, does not stand in the universe. They are all toiling, however secretly or slowly, in the province assigned them, and to a use in the economy of the world; the higher and more complex organizations to higher and more catholic service. And man seems to play, by his instincts and activity, a certain part that even tells on the general face of the planet, drains swamps, leads rivers into dry countries for their irrigation, perforates forests and stony mountain chains with roads, hinders the inroads of the sea on the continent, as if dressing the globe for happier races. . . .

Our helm is given up to a better guidance than our own; the course of events is quite too strong for any helmsman, and our little wherry is taken in tow by the ship of the great Admiral which knows the way, and has the force to draw men and states and planets to their good.

Such and so potent is this high method by which the Divine Providence sends the *chiefest benefits under the mask of calamities*, that I do not think we shall by any perverse ingenuity prevent the blessing.

In seeing this guidance of events, in seeing this felicity without example that has rested on the Union thus far, I find new confidence for the future.

I could heartily wish that our will and endeavor were more active parties to the work. But I see in all directions the light breaking. Trade and government will not alone be the favored

aims of mankind, but every useful, every elegant art, every exercise of the imagination, the height of reason, the noblest affection, the purest religion will find their home in our institutions, and write our laws for the benefit of men.

*The Fortune of the Republic, 1879*

# American Vistas

WALT WHITMAN

## I. AMERICAN FEUILLAGE

America always!  
Always our own feuillage!  
Always Florida's green peninsula! Always the priceless delta of  
Louisiana! Always the cotton-fields of Alabama and Texas!  
Always California's golden hills and hollows—and the silver  
mountains of New Mexico! Always soft-breath'd Cuba!  
Always the vast slope drain'd by the Southern Sea—inseparable with  
the slopes drain'd by the Eastern and Western Seas;  
The area the eighty-third year of These States—the three and a half  
millions of square miles;  
The eighteen thousand miles of sea-coast and bay-coast on the main  
—the thirty thousand miles of river navigation,  
The seven millions of distinct families, and the same number of  
dwellings— Always these, and more, branching forth into  
numberless branches;  
Always the free range and diversity; always the continent of  
Democracy!  
Always the prairies, pastures, forests, vast cities, travelers, Kanada,  
the snows;  
Always these compact lands—lands tied at the hips with the belt  
stringing the huge oval lakes;  
Always the West, with strong native persons—the increasing density  
there—the habitans, friendly, threatening, ironical, scorning  
invaders;  
All sights, South, North, East—all deeds, promiscuously done at all  
times,  
All characters, movements, growths—a few noticed, myriads un-  
noticed,  
Through Mannahatta's streets I walking, these things gathering;  
On interior rivers, by night, in the glare of pine knots, steamboats  
wooding up;  
Sunlight by day on the valley of the Susquehanna, and on the  
valleys of the Potomac and Rappahannock, and the valleys of  
the Roanoke and Delaware;

In their northerly wilds, beasts of prey haunting the Adirondacks,  
the hills—or lapping the Saginaw waters to drink;  
In a lonesome inlet, a sheldrake, lost from the flock, sitting on the  
water, rocking silently;  
In farmers' barns, oxen in the stable, their harvest labor done—they  
rest standing—they are too tired;  
Afar on arctic ice, the she-walrus lying drowsily, while her cubs play  
around;  
The hawk sailing where men have not yet sail'd—the farthest polar  
sea, ripply, crystalline, open, beyond the floes;  
White drift spooning ahead, where the ship in the tempest dashes;  
On solid land, what is done in cities, as the bells all strike midnight  
together;  
In primitive woods, the sounds there also sounding—the howl of the  
wolf, the scream of the panther, and the hoarse bellow of the  
elk;  
In winter beneath the hard blue ice of Moosehead Lake—in summer  
visible through the clear waters, the great trout swimming;  
In lower latitudes, in warmer air, in the Carolinas, the large black  
buzzard floating slowly, high beyond the tree tops,  
Below, the red cedar, festoon'd with tylandria—the pines and  
cypresses, growing out of the white sand that spreads far and  
flat;  
Rude boats descending the big Pedee—climbing plants, parasites,  
with color'd flowers and berries, enveloping huge trees,  
The waving drapery on the live oak, trailing long and low, noise-  
lessly waved by the wind;  
The camp of Georgia wagoners, just after dark—the supper-fires,  
and the cooking and eating by whites and negroes,  
Thirty or forty great wagons—the mules, cattle, horses, feeding from  
troughs,  
The shadows, gleams up under the leaves of the old sycamore-trees  
—the flames—with the black smoke from the pitch-pine, curl-  
ing and rising;  
Southern fishermen fishing—the sounds and inlets of North  
Carolina's coast—the shad-fishery and the herring-fishery—the  
large sweep-seines—the windlasses on shore work'd by horses—  
the clearing, curing, and packing houses;  
Deep in the forest, in piney woods, turpentine dropping from the  
incisions in the trees—There are the turpentine works,  
There are the negroes at work, in good health,—the ground in all  
directions is cover'd with pine straw;

—In Tennessee and Kentucky slaves busy in the coalings, at the  
 forge, by the furnace-blaze, or at the corn-shucking;  
 In Virginia; the planter's son returning after a long absence, joyfully  
 welcom'd and kissed by the aged mulatto nurse;  
 On rivers, boatmen safely moor'd at night-fall, in their boats, under  
 shelter of high banks,  
 Some of the younger men dance to the sound of the banjo or fiddle  
 —others sit on the gunwhale, smoking and talking;  
 Late in the afternoon, the mocking-bird, the American mimic, sing-  
 ing in the Great Dismal Swamp—there are the greenish waters,  
 the resinous odor, the plenteous moss, the cypress tree, and the  
 juniper tree;  
 —Northward, young men of Mannahatta—the target company from  
 an excursion returning home at evening—the musket-muzzles  
 all bear bunches of flowers presented by women;  
 Children at play—or on his father's lap a young boy fallen asleep,  
 (how his lips move! how he smiles in his sleep!)  
 The scout riding on horseback over the plains west of the Mississippi  
 —he ascends a knoll and sweeps his eye around;  
 California life—the miner, bearded, dress'd in his rude costume—  
 the stanch California friendship—the sweet air—the graves one,  
 in passing, meets, solitary, just aside the horse path;  
 Down in Texas, the cotton-field, the negro-cabins—drivers driving  
 mules or oxen before rude carts—cotton bales piled on banks  
 and wharves;  
 Encircling all, vast-darting, up and wide, the American Soul, with  
 equal hemispheres—one Love, one Dilation or Pride;  
 —In arriere, the peace-talk with the Iroquois, the aborigines—the  
 calumet, the pipe of good-will, arbitration, and indorsement,  
 The sachem blowing the smoke first toward the sun and then to-  
 ward the earth,  
 The drama of the scalp-dance enacted with painted faces and gut-  
 tural exclamations,  
 The setting out of the war-party—the long and stealthy march,  
 The single-file—the swinging hatchets—the surprise and slaughter  
 of enemies;  
 —All the acts, scenes, ways, persons, attitudes of These States—  
 reminiscences, all institutions,  
 All These States, compact—Every square mile of These States, with-  
 out excepting a particle—you also—me also,  
 Me pleas'd, rambling in lanes and country fields, Paumanok's fields,

Me, observing the spiral flight of two little yellow butterflies,  
shuffling between each other, ascending high in the air;  
The darting swallow, the destroyer of insects—the fall traveler south-  
ward, but returning northward early in the spring;  
The country boy at the close of the day, driving the herd of cows,  
and shouting to them as they loiter to browse by the road-side;  
The city wharf—Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, New  
Orleans, San Francisco,  
The departing ships, when the sailors heave at the capstan;  
—Evening—me in my room—the setting sun,  
The setting summer sun shining in my open window, showing the  
swarm of flies, suspended, balancing in the air in the centre of  
the room, darting athwart, up and down, casting swift shadows  
in specks on the opposite wall, where the shine is;  
The athletic American matron speaking in public to crowds of  
listeners;  
Males, females, immigrants, combinations—the copiousness—the in-  
dividuality of The States, each for itself—the money makers;  
Factories, machinery, the mechanical forces—the windlass, lever,  
pulley—All certainties,  
The certainty of space, increase, freedom, futurity,  
In space, the sporades, the scatter'd islands, the stars—on the firm  
earth, the lands, my lands;  
O lands! all so dear to me—what you are, (whatever it is) I become  
a part of that, whatever it is;  
Southward there, I screaming, with wings slowly flapping, with the  
myriads of gulls wintering along the coasts of Florida—or in  
Louisiana, with pelicans breeding;  
Otherways, there, atwixt the banks of the Arkansaw, the Rio  
Grande, the Nueces, the Brazos, the Tombigbee, the Red  
River, the Saskatchewan, or the Osage, I with the spring waters  
laughing and skipping and running;  
Northward, on the sands, on some shallow bay of Paumanok, I,  
with parties of snowy herons wading in the wet to seek worms  
and aquatic plants;  
Retreating, triumphantly twittering, the king-bird, from piercing  
the crow with its bill, for amusement—And I triumphantly  
twittering;  
The migrating flock of wild geese alighting in autumn to refresh  
themselves—the body of the flock feed—the sentinels outside  
move around with erect heads watching, and are from time to

time relieved by other sentinels—And I feeding and taking turns with the rest;

In Kanadian forests, the moose, large as an ox, corner'd by hunters, rising, desperately on his hind-feet, and plunging with his fore-feet, the hoofs as sharp and knives—And I, plunging at the hunters, corner'd and desperate;

In the Mannahatta, streets, piers, shipping, store-houses, and the countless workmen working in the shops,

And I too of the Mannahatta, singing thereof—and no less in myself than the whole of the Mannahatta in itself,

Singing the song of These, my ever-united lands—my body no more inevitably united, part to part, and made one identity, any more than my lands are inevitably united, and made ONE IDENTITY;

Nativities, climates, the grass of the great Pastoral Plains;

Cities, labors, death, animals, products, war, good and evil,—these me,

These affording, in all their particulars, endless feuillage to me and to America, how can I do less than pass the clew of the union of them, to afford the like to you?

Whoever you are! how can I but offer you divine leaves, that you also be eligible as I am?

How can I but, as here, chanting, invite you for yourself to collect bouquets of the incomparable feuillage of These States?

*Leaves of Grass, 1860*

## II. THOU MOTHER WITH THY EQUAL BROOD

### I

Thou Mother with thy equal brood,  
Thou varied chain of different States, yet one identity only,  
A special song before I go I'd sing o'er all the rest,  
For thee, the future.

I'd sow a seed for thee of endless Nationality,  
I'd fashion thy ensemble including body and soul,  
I'd show away ahead thy real Union, and how it may be accomplish'd.

The paths to the house I seek to make,  
But leave to those to come the house itself.

Belief I sing, and preparation;  
As Life and Nature are not great with reference to the present only,

But greater still from what is yet to come,  
Out of that formula for thee I sing.

2

As a strong bird on pinions free,  
Joyous, the amplest spaces heavenward cleaving,  
Such be the thought I'd think of thee America,  
Such be the recitative I'd bring for thee.

The conceits of the poets of other lands I'd bring thee not,  
Nor the compliments that have served their turn so long,  
Nor rhyme, nor the classics, nor perfume of foreign court or indoor  
library;

But an odor I'd bring as from forests of pine in Maine, or breath of  
an Illinois prairie,  
With open airs of Virginia or Georgia or Tennessee, or from  
Texas uplands, or Florida's glades,  
Or the Saguenay's black stream, or the wide blue spread of Huron,  
With presentment of Yellowstone's scenes, or Yosemite,  
And murmuring under, pervading all, I'd bring the rustling sea-sound,  
That endlessly sounds from the two Great Seas of the world.

And for thy subtler sense subtler refrains dread Mother,  
Preludes of intellect tallying these and thee, mind-formulas fitted for  
thee, real and sane and large as these and thee,  
Thou! mounting higher, diving deeper than we knew, thou tran-  
scendental Union!  
By thee fact to be justified, blended with thought,  
Thought of man justified, blended with God,  
Through thy idea, lo, the immortal reality!  
Through thy reality, lo, the immortal idea!

3

Brain of the New World, what a task is thine,  
To formulate the Modern—out of the peerless grandeur of the  
modern,  
Out of thyself, comprising science, to recast poems, churches, art,  
(Recast, may-be discard them, end them—may-be their work is  
done, who knows?)  
By vision, hand, conception, on the background of the mighty past,  
the dead,

To limn with absolute faith the mighty living present.

And yet thou living present brain, heir of the dead, the Old World  
brain,  
Thou that lay folded like an unborn babe within its folds so long,  
Thou carefully prepared by it so long—haply thou but unfoldest it,  
only maturest it,  
It to eventuate in thee—the essence of the by-gone time contain'd in  
thee,  
Its poems, churches, arts, unwitting to themselves, destined with  
reference to thee;  
Thou but the apples, long, long a-growing,  
The fruit of all the Old ripening to-day in thee.

4

Sail, sail thy best, ship of Democracy,  
Of value is thy freight, 'tis not the Present only,  
The Past is also stored in thee,  
Thou holdest not the venture of thyself alone, not of the Western  
Continent alone,  
Earth's *résumé* entire floats on thy keel O ship, is steadied by the  
spars,  
With thee Time Voyages in trust, the antecedent nations sink or  
swim with thee,  
With all their ancient struggles, martyrs, heroes, epics, wars, thou  
bear'st the other continents,  
Theirs, theirs as much as thine, the destination-port triumphant;  
Steer then with good strong hand and wary eye O helmsman, thou  
carriest great companions,  
Venerable priestly Asia sails this day with thee,  
And royal feudal Europe sails with thee.

5

Beautiful world of new superber birth that rises to my eyes,  
Like a limitless golden cloud filling the western sky,  
Emblem of general maternity lifted above all,  
Sacred shape of the bearer of daughters and sons,  
Out of thy teeming womb thy giant babes in ceaseless procession  
issuing,  
Acceding from such gestation, taking and giving continual strength  
and life,  
World of the real—world of the twain in one,

World of the soul, born by the world of the real alone, led to  
 identity, body, by it alone,  
 Yet in beginning only, incalculable masses of composite precious  
 materials,  
 By history's cycles forwarded, by every nation, language, hither sent,  
 Ready, collected here, a freer, vast electric world, to be constructed  
 here,  
 (The true New World the world of orbic science, morals, literatures  
 to come,)  
 Thou wonder world yet undefined, unform'd, neither do I define  
 thee,  
 How can I pierce the impenetrable blank of the future?  
 I feel thy ominous greatness evil as well as good,  
 I watch thee advancing, absorbing the present, transcending the  
 past,  
 I see thy light lighting, and thy shadow shadowing, as if the entire  
 globe,  
 But I do not undertake to define thee, hardly to comprehend thee,  
 I but thee name, thee prophesy, as now,  
 I merely thee ejaculate!  
 Thee in thy future,  
 Thee in thy only permanent life; career, thy own unloosen'd mind,  
 thy soaring spirit,  
 Thee as another equally needed sun, radiant, ablaze, swift-moving,  
 fructifying all,  
 Thee risen in potent cheerfulness and joy, in endless great hilarity,  
 Scattering for good the cloud that hung so long, that weigh'd so  
 long upon the mind of man, .  
 The doubt, suspicion, dread, of gradual, certain decadence of man;  
 Thee in thy larger, saner brood of female, male—thee in thy  
 athletes, moral, spiritual, South, North, West, East,  
 (To thy immortal breasts, Mother of All, thy every daughter, son,  
 endear'd alike, forever equal,)  
 Thee in thy own musicians, singers, artists, unborn yet, but certain,  
 Thee in thy moral wealth and civilization, (until which thy proudest  
 material civilization must remain in vain,)  
 Thee in thy all-supplying, all-enclosing worship—thee in no single  
 bible, saviour, merely,  
 Thy saviours countless, latent within thyself, thy bibles incessant  
 within thyself, equal to any, divine as any,  
 (Thy soaring course thee formulating, not in thy two great wars,  
 nor in thy century's visible growth,

But far more in these leaves and chants; thy chants, great Mother!)  
Thee in an education grown of thee, in teachers, studies, students,  
born of thee,  
Thee in thy democratic fêtes-en-masse, thy high original festivals,  
operas, lecturers, preachers,  
Thee in thy ultimata, (the preparations only now completed, the  
edifice on sure foundations tied,)  
Thee in thy pinnacles, intellect, thought, thy topmost rational joys,  
thy love and godlike aspiration,  
In thy resplendent coming literati, thy full-lung'd orators, thy  
sacerdotal bards, kosmic savans,  
These! these in thee, (certain to come,) to-day I prophesy.

6

Land tolerating all, accepting all, not for the good alone, all good  
for thee,  
Land in the realms of God to be a realm unto thyself,  
Under the rule of God to be a rule unto thyself.

(Lo, where arise three peerless stars,  
To be thy natal stars my country, Ensemble, Evolution, Freedom,  
Set in the sky of Law.)

Land of unprecedented faith, God's faith,  
Thy soul, thy very subsoil, all upheav'd,  
The general inner earth so long so sedulously draped over, now hence  
for what it is boldly laid bare,  
Open'd by thee to heaven's light for benefit or bale.

Not for success alone,  
Nor to fair-sail unintermitted always,  
The storm shall dash thy face, the murk of war and worse than war  
shall cover thee all over,  
(Wert capable of war, its tug and trials? be capable of peace, its trials,  
For the tug and mortal strain of nations come at last in prosperous  
peace, not war;)  
In many a smiling mask death shall approach beguiling thee, thou  
in disease shalt swelter,  
The livid cancer spread its hideous claws, clinging upon thy  
breasts, seeking to strike thee deep within,  
Consumption of the worst, moral consumption, shall rouge thy  
face with hectic,

But thou shalt face thy fortunes, thy diseases, and surmount them all,  
Whatever they are to-day and whatever through time they may be,  
They each and all shall lift and pass away and cease from thee,  
While thou, Time's spirals rounding, out of thyself, thyself still  
extricating fusing,  
Equable, natural, mystical Union thou, (the mortal with immortal  
blent,)  
Shalt soar toward the fulfilment of the future, the spirit of the body  
and the mind,  
The soul, its destinies.

The soul, its destinies, the real real,  
(Purport of all these apparitions of the real;)  
In thee America, the soul, its destinies,  
Thou globe of globes! thou wonder nebulous!  
By many a throe of heat and cold convuls'd, (by these thyself  
solidifying,)  
Thou mental, moral orb—thou New, indeed new, Spiritual World!  
The Present holds thee not—for such vast growth as thine,  
For such unparalled'd flight as thine, such brood as thine,  
The FUTURE only holds thee and can hold thee.

*Leaves of Grass, 1881*

# *What's Wrong with the United States?*

THOMAS JEFFERSON WERTENBAKER

Recently I received a bundle of books for review. They all dealt with conditions in the United States, and most of them were extremely pessimistic. One author believes that the horde of immigrants who poured into the country in the years just preceding the World War have brought us to the verge of ruin. Unrestricted immigration, he says, has filled our cities with morons, criminals, and the physically unfit, has lowered wages, imperilled our institutions, and impaired the racial stock. We have now closed the doors, it is true, and we are trying to keep them closed, but it will be centuries before we can assimilate the conglomerate mass of humanity which we have admitted. It is a permanent disaster, perhaps an irretrievable disaster.

With a troubled mind, I turn to the next volume. But it, too, sounds the alarm-bell. This time it is our tendency toward un-directed reproduction which appears as the great peril. The best classes, leaders in every walk of life, we are told, are restricting the size of their families, while the unfit—the lowest classes of workers, the ignorant, criminals, defectives—are reproducing with great rapidity. It is the survival of the unfittest. The race ascends the ladder by centuries of laborious striving, only in the end to cut off its own head. Seeing in this volume only the blackest future for the United States, I lay it aside more troubled than ever.

The next is a volume by a foreign observer—a diplomat who had dwelt long in this country. Perhaps he can see something good in us. Alas! He is of the opinion that we have bartered off our souls to Mammon. "Big profits overshadow liberty in all its forms," he says, "and the exercise of intelligence is encouraged only if it fits in with the common aim. Any one who turns aside to dabble in research or diletantism is regarded as almost mentally perverted. . . . In the universities the majority of the students are satisfied if they memorize an array of ready-made facts, and they seek from their professors not culture but the fundamentals of a successful career. . . . The material advance is immeasurable in comparison with the Old World, but from the point of view of individual refinement and art the sacrifice is real indeed. Even the humblest European sees in art an aristocratic symbol of his own

personality, and modern America has no national art and does not even feel the need of one."

In disgust I leave my study and wander to the university library. There, by chance, I happen upon a well-known novel, the work of an American. In it the average, middle-class American is pilloried. Self-assertive, crude, ignorant, provincial, blind to the better things of life, satisfied with his over-decorated house or his drugstore, with its soda-fountain and marble-topped counter, he brings a blush to the face.

I lay the volume down, and take up a newspaper. It informs me that the United States is the most unpopular nation in the world. In one column there are strictures upon Uncle Shylock, in another complaints from Japan at the abrogation of the Gentlemen's Agreement, in a third accusations from Latin America of international hypocrisy. A fourth column is devoted to the crime wave in Chicago. It states that in the six years ending last spring there were 1,795 murders in Cook County; that in four years 45 policemen have been killed; that crime is open, and criminal gangs in control. Rum-trucks are plying merrily, the city is wide open, bootleggers and bookmakers are prospering, while the mayor is valiantly defending his flock from the British lion, and ordering the Mississippi back to its proper bounds.

What of all this? Is it true? Are we on the road to perdition? Are we incapable of self-government? Are we of low-grade racial stock, criminally inclined, sordid, without national art, vainglorious, aggressive, unjust to our neighbors? I take my hat and leave the library for a walk on the campus. A walk through our beautiful campus is often very helpful. The dignified old trees and the lovely buildings calm the nerves and clarify the thoughts. What is the meaning of America? I ask myself. What part has it played in world history? What lies before it?

I picture the first settlers at Jamestown and at Plymouth. Simple, sturdy folk, face to face with unlimited opportunities, and almost unlimited difficulties. Theirs were the riches of a continent, but only on condition that they wrest it from stubborn Mother Nature. It required courage, physical endurance, and an iron will to desert a safe and comfortable home, to risk starvation, disease, and the tomahawk, to hew out a clearing, build a cabin, and face the task of rearing a family under wilderness conditions. The Virginians and New Englanders of three centuries ago may have contributed little to science, art, and literature, but they did their part in a work no less important. They added a great continent to the civilized world.

In no sense inferior to their fellow Europeans whom they left behind, their talents were of necessity turned into different channels. This man might have been another Milton had he remained in England; in Massachusetts he had to become a soldier in the unending war against the wilderness; this man might have been an artist, this one a statesman, this a scientist. The colonial period of American history produced few great names. Benjamin Franklin alone stands out above the general level of mediocrity. But if Europe, in the years from 1607 to 1775, boasted of its Harvey, Boyle, Milton, Newton, Kepler, Galileo, Molière, and a host of others, the Americans could rightfully claim that they had done their full duty toward civilization by advancing its borders into a New World. To fell trees or to open a cornfield seems an ignoble task when compared with investigation into the mysteries of nature or the writing of epic poems, but the effect upon human welfare may be as great in one case as in the other.

When, with the dawn of the national period, settlers began to push along the narrow valleys of the Appalachian ranges, out into the Mississippi basin, a new and rich world opened before America. There were great plains waiting for the plough and the sickle, prairies ready for the ranchman's herd, hidden treasures of coal, iron, and oil, a network of rivers spreading out like a system of natural canals. Was it not the duty of the nation to pour out its energy and its talents in the development of this land, endowed so lavishly by Nature's hand? Wonderfully well was the task performed. In a century the frontier advanced 3,000 miles to the Pacific. In another half-century the frontier disappeared. Where formerly were only prairies, deserts, mountains, and interminable forests, are now millions of industrious people, great cities, fields of wheat and corn, smoke-covered industrial centres, concrete roads, railway lines, hospitals, colleges, schools.

This great work, accomplished in so remarkably short a period, cannot be explained entirely by the abundance of natural resources. Mexico is a land of untold natural wealth, but it has experienced no such development as that of the United States because the Mexicans lack the resourcefulness, energy, and industry of our people. Says J. Ellis Barker, the noted English economist, in *America's Secret*: "The country was settled by men possessing the conquering spirit and the spirit of leadership. These men fought among themselves, fought the Indians, and conquered the wilderness around them. . . . They created a new race, possessed of daring enterprise, of boundless energy, and of the passionate

desire for achievement and success. . . . American economic success is less due to the vastness of its natural wealth and to the excellence of its machinery than to the ambition, good sense, ingenuity, and industry of the people and the wisdom and energy of the leaders.”

But American energy could not have accomplished so much had it not been aided by labor-saving machinery, which in turn was the product of American inventive genius. In this country there has always been an urgent demand for labor. With natural resources so abundant and cheap, all that has been needed to make them yield rich returns was workers and ever more workers. It was this, as Captain John Smith explained to the London Company, which made it difficult for the infant colony of Virginia to compete with the potash, iron, and glass manufactures of Europe. It was this, also, which brought on the country the curse of slavery. But it brought one great benefit—the urge to create machinery which would economize in human labor.

It became the object of every American inventor to devise machines which could do the work of twenty men. Eli Whitney led the way with the cotton-gin. This device made it possible to multiply many times over the output of raw cotton, with the result that cotton cloth came within the means of many millions who formerly had to do without. It was Thomas Jefferson who worked out the proper curves for the plough, and his fellow Virginian—Cyrus McCormick—who was chiefly responsible for the reaper. To-day our great agricultural areas are cultivated largely by means of machinery—the tractor, the gang-plough, the reaper, the thresher, the wheat-drill, potato-planters, hay-stackers. In 1850 the value of our agricultural machinery was \$151,000,000; in 1920 it had mounted to \$3,600,000,000. Under present conditions the average farm-worker in the United States produces far more than his fellow laborer in any other country in the world.

At first America was content with exploiting her agricultural resources. But with the opening of the nineteenth century there came an all-important change—the American industrial revolution. To-day not only is the bulk of our wealth created by manufactures, but we produce a larger quantity of manufactured goods than all the other nations of the world combined. Six per cent of the world's people produce approximately 50 per cent of the world's manufactured goods.

Here, too, the explanation is found in the use of labor-saving machinery. Eli Whitney is known chiefly as the inventor of the

cotton-gin, yet he is responsible for another achievement quite as important. It was Whitney who worked out the principle of standardization, or interchangeability, in manufacture, the very foundation of large-scale production. Turning his attention to fire-arms, he announced that he intended to make the same parts of different guns "as much like each other as the successive impressions of a copperplate engraving." He was ridiculed by the ordnance officials of France and England. Yet he succeeded so well that standardization began to make its way into the manufacture of other articles, lowering production costs, increasing the output, and emancipating workmen from killing toil.

In the footsteps of Whitney followed other inventors of tool-machines. American copying-lathes and American gun machinery became the best in the world. It was a long cry from the day when the youthful Slater stole away from England to set up the first spinning machinery in the United States, to the time when the British Government purchased in America a full set of machines for the Royal Small Arms factory at Enfield and imported American workmen to run them. In the years which followed, American inventive genius carried the use of machinery in industry to undreamed-of lengths. There came new machinery in printing, in shoemaking, in the manufacture of automobiles, of furniture, of clothing, clocks, firearms.

With what result? That one American worker produces to-day about as much as four British workers. That the wealth per inhabitant in the United States increased from \$308 in 1850 to \$2,731 in 1922. That the annual income of the American people mounted from \$62,000,000,000 in 1921 to \$90,000,000,000 in 1926. That the annual income of the United States to-day is as great as the entire wealth of Great Britain, and is five times as great as the annual income of England, nine times as great as Germany's and twenty-two times as great as that of Italy. It is ten times as great as that of China, despite the fact that there are four times as many workers in China as in the United States. In other words, one worker produces forty times as much in the United States as one worker in China. In short, the result has been that in this country to-day human beings have reached a higher state of material welfare than in any other era of world history or in any other nation of the world.

I know that some one will say: "It is for these very things that we are criticised. We have been accused of worshipping material gain to the neglect of literature, art, music, and science." But,

after all, is not the material more fundamental? What boots it if we produce a Shakespeare or a Michelangelo, if there are millions living in misery and degradation? There once lived in England a devotee of beauty. He had the painter's sensibility to color, the sculptor's grasp of form, the poet's gift of language. Regarding beauty as the visible revelation of God, he devoted himself with the apostle's fervor to the task of arousing the British public to a more genuine love of beautiful things. But in the midst of his career he turned aside to become a social reformer. We find him trying to reclaim the slums, organizing a gang of street-sweepers, investing in co-operative enterprises. To many this seemed an unaccountable shift. What connection was there between painting and architecture, on the one hand, and the earning of bread in the mills of Sheffield, on the other? To Ruskin's mind the two were intimately associated. He had learned that a people cannot lift their souls to the clouds while their feet are stuck in the mire of hunger and overwork. "I am tormented," he wrote, "between the longing for rest and lovely life, and the sense of the terrific call of human crime for resistance, and of human misery for help."

After all, as an English writer tells us, "The most precious possession of a nation consists in the productive power of the people." In a country where the masses labor early and late for a bare living, where they have insufficient food and clothing, where there is little time for things of the mind and spirit, the scale of civilization must of necessity be low. The great contrast between China and the United States is that China depends for production upon man-power, the United States upon machinery. Under any form of distribution there will be in the United States hundreds who can be placed in what has been called the builder class—leaders in science, architecture, business, invention, art—to one in China.

If Ruskin found England sterile soil for his seeds of beauty, how much more hopeless would his task have been in India or China? India and China developed a promising civilization centuries ago, but these civilizations stagnated. They stagnated because, while the methods of economic production remained fixed, the population doubled and quadrupled. The margin over the barest necessities gradually dwindled, until life became one long, bitter struggle to keep hunger from the door.

Why, then, ask our critics, has not the United States outstripped all rivals in the cultural fields? Why has it not produced a Shakespeare, a Beethoven, a Raphael? The answer is found in our history.

We have barely emerged from the stage of preparation. The passing of the frontier is still fresh in the memory of us all. We are even now forging our giant industrial system and widening each year the margin between the worker and the bare means of subsistence. The future—we claim the future as our own. I know that Sidney Smith said of us a century ago: "Others claim honor because of things done by a long line of ancestors; an American glories in the achievements of a distant posterity. . . . Others appeal to history; an American appeals to prophecy." But in the years which have passed since Smith made this mocking statement, the prophecies of the Americans of his day have been fully justified. "Who in the four quarters of the globe reads an American book?" he asked, "or looks at an American painting or statue? . . . What new substances have their chemists discovered? Who eats from American plates? . . . or sleeps on American blankets?" To-day this brings a smile. Yet, I venture to say, the gibes of our present critics may seem equally amusing before the passing of many decades.

Already, while yet in the stage of preparation, American civilization has done its full share for human welfare. In invention our record stands without a parallel. Says J. Ellis Barker: "Americans invented the steamboat, the cotton-gin, the sewing-machine, the telephone, the typewriter, the talking-machine, the incandescent lamp, the linotype, and the single-type composing machine, the motion-picture machine, the airplane, vulcanization of rubber, modern agricultural machinery, modern boot-making machinery. These American inventions have revolutionized transport and industry, agriculture and commerce, and have vastly increased man's power over nature." In the fields of invention Edison alone is enough to place the United States among the foremost.

In medical research this country has done noble work. An American, William T. G. Morton, gave suffering humanity the boon of anæsthesia. His priority in this great discovery has been disputed, it is true, but all the other claimants were also natives of the United States. Theobald Smith is the founder of one of the most important branches of bacteriology—for it was he who first discovered the part played by insects in conveying infectious diseases. It was Doctor Smith, also, who conquered that scourge of childhood—diphtheria—by his discovery of toxin-antitoxin. Equally important was the work of the American Federal Commission, under Doctor Walter Reed, in demonstrating that a certain species of mosquito is the agent for spreading yellow fever.

But it is only within the past few decades that the United States has taken its place as the undisputed leader in medical research. The founding of the Rockefeller Institute has not only brought to this country some of the world's greatest investigators but it has organized and financed preventive work in almost every part of the world. The headquarters of the scientific army which is warring against disease is now in the United States.

It was two Americans, the Wright brothers, who gave the world the airplane. True, during the World War the leadership in aeronautics seemed to have slipped from our grasp, and many an American soldier in the Argonne or on the Meuse, as he gazed above at the German planes hovering over his head, wondered why his own government could not furnish as many planes and as good as the enemy. But to-day the wonderful exploits of Lindbergh, Chamberlain, and Byrd in conquering the Atlantic have aroused universal enthusiasm. On all sides it is acknowledged that American engines are the best in the world, and that American aviators are inferior to none in daring and skill.

In exploration, Americans have done their full share. The names of Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and Zebulon Pike loom large in history, while Peary has the distinction of being the first to reach the North Pole. In recent days the exploits of Byrd and the dirigible *Norge* in flying over the Pole have added new lustre to American exploration.

In the strictly cultural aspects of her life, America already is entering the stage of accomplishment. In no field is there greater hope than in painting. Charles L. Buchanan, the distinguished critic, says: "There are persons who believe that American painting—our landscape-painting in particular—is, in a way, the finest development that this phase of art has so far shown. . . . We find that the average person is talking about the possibility of a problematic future for American painting, without the slightest notion of the fact that a superb American painting is in our very midst." That Mr. Buchanan is not alone in this view is shown by the recent statement of the great French painter Henri Matisse: "You have made enormous progress during this generation. Before, you had almost nothing. Now you are a nation of painters to be considered alongside the European nations, with their long artistic histories and traditions."

If in literature the fulfilment has not been so prompt as in painting, the promise is equally great. Says the English writer John Boynton Priestley: "I believe that [America] has a greater mass

of what we might call the raw material of literary genius than any other contemporary national literature." Another critic gives it as his opinion that within a reasonable time the United States "will produce as glistening a galaxy of geniuses as any other country can boast." Certain it is that in fiction this country leads the world, and that New York has become the theatrical producing centre of the world—the place to go, above all others, to study the modern drama.

And what of architecture? Has America produced anything worth while in that important field? Perhaps we have our best answer in an incident which occurred a few years ago in London. An American was visiting some of the architectural gems of the old city—St. Mary-le-Bow, St. Brides, and others. With him was a distinguished Englishman, a Fellow of the Royal Society of British Architects. As they stood gazing up at the noble dome of St. Paul's, the American remarked: "I suppose Sir Christopher Wren's work has a profound influence on modern British architecture." The Englishman turned to him: "Listen. Do you really want to know the greatest influence in British architecture to-day? Well, it's the United States of America." The measured judgment of Thomas E. Tallmage, the distinguished American architect, is as follows: "Previous to 1893 there was not a single class of building in which we excelled or equalled contemporary work of the mother countries. . . . To-day there is hardly a single class of structure in which an excellent claim cannot be advanced for either our supremacy or our equality."

In the field of political science America has accomplished much. No assemblage in world history can surpass the Constitutional Convention, at Philadelphia, in its combined knowledge of the history and science of government; and many have thought the Constitution the greatest political document ever struck off by the hand of man. And throughout their history the American people, despite an occasional tendency to be led astray by bosses and demagogues, have displayed a capacity for self-government, a sanity in public affairs, which has aroused the admiration of foreign observers.

Nor need Americans blush at their record in the field of pure science. A conservative summary of the situation seems to be that of J. McKeen Cattell, the psychologist: "It is my general impression . . . that the United States is in advance of Great Britain and Germany in the biological and geological sciences, and in astronomy;

behind them in physics, chemistry, and physiology; about on even terms with them in mathematics.”

Professor Joseph Mayer, of Tufts College, in the January *Scientific Monthly*, states that in the last hundred years the United States, France, Great Britain, and Germany each has produced more than thirty outstanding scientists, while no other country has produced more than six.

In the eighteenth century, when the forests and the Indians were still unconquered, America produced two eminent scientists—Benjamin Franklin and Benjamin Thompson. They were forerunners of a numerous and distinguished band which followed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. One of the greatest was Josiah Willard Gibbs, who has been called the “Newton of chemistry.” Among the noteworthy accomplishments of recent years must be included the interferometer experiments of two American physicists, Michelson and Morley; Millikan’s measurements of the electron; the work of Rutherford, Pickering, Abbe, Newcomb, and Russell in astronomy; of Newbury, Powell, Gilbert, Dalton, Chamberlain, and Daly in geology; of Morgan, Wilson, Jennings, Wheeler, Osborn, and Loeb in biology. America produced “the world’s greatest psychologist” in William James, and since the publication of his *Principles of Psychology*, in 1890, has been the centre of activity in this field.

Professor Mayer’s estimate of America’s future is indeed optimistic. “The star of her scholarly accomplishment rose comparatively late, but it is quite apparently of first magnitude, and every sign points to its becoming the most brilliant spectacle in the firmament before the second quarter of the new century has passed.”

As for our educational system, our organized charity, our public health system, there is every reason for pride. Certainly the American surgeons and dentists are the best in the world, American hospitals the most complete and efficient.

It is not the purpose of this article to answer all the criticisms aimed at the United States. Some of these criticisms are inspired by ignorance or jealousy, others are matters of controversy, still others are trivial. Some, beyond question, are sound in character, and point to real defects in our system, real dangers for the future. But let us not lose our proper perspective because of the present volley of abuse. We may agree that unrestricted immigration has produced a very real problem; that undirected reproduction has its dangers; that there is need for curbing crime in our large cities; that there are too many boxlike little cottages spread out over the

country; that our fellow citizens are sometimes aggressive and a bit trying when they visit foreign countries.

But let us pity those critics who see nothing beyond these blemishes, when the most amazing spectacle in all history stretches out before their eyes—the chaining of the forces of nature, the freeing of man from the bondage of killing labor, the creation of a huge surplus above the needs of the hour and its diversion to the higher and better things of life, not only to greater comforts and opportunities for the individual, but to education, to research, to literature, to art. After all, we have a right to view with pride a past of splendid accomplishment; to look forward with confidence to a future of unprecedented promise and hope.

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# These "United" States

WILLIAM B. MUNRO

## I

The French statesman, Jules Ferry, once suggested that in order to stay united a great nation should try to keep disunited. His paradox points to a truth which is too often overlooked by the prophets of nationalism, namely, that any volatile mass, when it grows large enough, will get out of hand unless there are forces operating from different directions to keep it stabilized. This law of counterpoise does not restrict itself to the universe of nature alone. It holds for the social structure as well.

Hence the diversity of interests and opinion which one finds within the four corners of the United States is not a source of national weakness, but of strength. It prefigures the principle of checks and balances pushed down into the minds of the people—which is the place where its operations give the maximum security. Division of power at the top is not nearly so effective, from the standpoint of public stability, as diversity of popular opinion at the bottom.

A hundred and twenty million Americans call themselves "one nation indivisible," but as a matter of fact they encompass more internal divisions than can be found in any other nation the world over. Most happily, however, these divisions cut across one another from different directions. They parcel the country into a bewildering network which defies the genius of anyone to untangle. An "opinion map" of the United States, if it were a possibility, would be an amazing affair, with all the colors of a spectrum constantly shifting like bits of glass in a kaleidoscope. Some of the cleavages run broad and deep. They are the manifestations of diversity in race, in religion, in regional environment, and in economic interest. Others are merely related to some public issue which will presently pass off the stage and be replaced by others which give rise to new alignments.

Thus we have, in addition to the juxtaposition of native born and foreign born, Catholic and Protestant, Jew and Gentile, white and black, North and South, East and West, employers and employed, industrialists and agriculturalists, rural and urban—in

addition to these we have the more superficial but not less intense rivalry of wets and drys pro-Leaguers and anti-Leaguers, militarists and pacifists, progressives and standpatters, fundamentalists and modernists, socialists and individualists, high tariff and low tariff partisans, debt-cancellers and seekers for their full pound of flesh, with a hundred other conflicts of attitude on questions such as public ownership, the recognition of Soviet Russia, adhesion to the World Court, the disposition of Muscle Shoals, old age pensions, higher surtaxes, and all the rest. Assuredly the United States is a house divided against itself, but so badly divided that it can hardly fall in any one direction.

The first and most fundamental basis of internal division is geographic. The architects of the universe made sectionalism inevitable in the United States by differentiating the land into great regions which are wholly unlike in their national resources and hence in their economic capacity. The Atlantic seaboard, even in the earliest days of the Union, developed interests and aspirations which were different from those of the hinterland, and it has retained these ever since. The Southeast does not think as the Northwest does and there is no reason why it should.

Points of view are closely related to economic interest. Insurgency comes out of the West when the price of wheat skids low. Wall Street always roots for the administration when the stock market is buoyant. Corn is called a "Republican crop" while cotton is designated, with very good reason, as a "Democratic crop." Most legislators have home-district reservations hitched to all their fundamental principles. Senator Hiram Johnson believes in tariff revision downward—but not on citrus fruits. Senator Walsh of Massachusetts feels just the same way about shoes and textiles. Hancock was hardly right when he called the tariff "a local issue." It is a national issue built out of sectional ambitions. In other words the Congress of the United States, although its members are assumed to represent the states and the people, is in reality an assemblage of sectional ambassadors. It is a great economic council whose primary solicitude is to see that no part of the country gets any business advantage over any other part. The student of American politics should keep one eye on the map. He should remember that not people alone, but land and people, constitute these United States.

One need only follow the course of a tariff bill on its hectic journey through the Capitol to realize that the principle of a

fair sectional split is the first law of Congressional economics. Even the staunchest party allegiance gives way when sectional interests are at stake. The crossing of party lines in the Senate and the House is more often related to such home-district demands than to any divergence in political philosophy. Europeans often fail to understand the sinuosities of American politics because they overlook this fact. They think of New York and Kansas in the same terms because both are under the same flag, obey (more or less) the same Constitution, and speak (more or less) the same language. But these are about the only things that they have in common, while a hundred deep-reaching features of social and economic differentiation hold them apart.

## II

Then there are the racial and religious divisions. One need only look at the schedule of national origins, on which the immigration quotas are now based, to realize what an amazing ethnic polyglot goes under the caption of the American people. Within the great category of foreign born, however, there are innumerable subdivisions, and most fortunately so, for it would be a serious menace to the stability of the American nation if all or nearly all persons of foreign extraction were enrolled in a single political party or professed a single religious affiliation. Political controversies always develop intense bitterness when party lines coincide with racial and religious divisions. It has been the good fortune of the United States to have avoided this identity of alignment although there are now a few signs that we are moving closer to it. In some of the larger cities the existing party divisions represent racial cleavage and little else.

Men and women often go to the polls as they go to church. In thousands of American communities they are primed from the pulpit on the Sunday before the election. Some racial strains are inclining more and more to political solidity; nevertheless a good deal of cross-division remains. Voters of Irish birth or descent in the cities of New England and in New York are almost unanimously affiliated with the Democratic party. But in Pennsylvania, on the other hand, and in the cities of the Middle West, there is a large Irish-Republican element. Among voters of German descent the tendency is to Republicanism, although it is not strongly so. Citizens of Polish ancestry drift mostly into the Democratic ranks, while Scandinavians incline heavily to the other side and often to the insurgent branch of it. The Italians, as a race, have not

gone into either of the major political parties, but are well distributed, and the same is true of the Jews.

The desirability of maintaining this dispersion is self-evident. If anyone has doubts on this score, let him go to the countries of Central Europe and note what the identification of racial with political lines has accomplished there. The politician who strives to bring all his co-religionists into one political party is merely doing what he can to break down one of the chief props to American national security by substituting historic hatred for rational disagreement as the basis of party organization.

The political history of the South during the past half century should provide us with a lesson in this field. The measurably close identity of color and politics has bedeviled public life in the great region south of Mason and Dixon's line during the whole of this period. If there had been some way whereby the newly enfranchised Negroes could have been steered into both the major parties, instead of being concentrated into one of them, it would have changed the whole temper of southern politics and would have made this galaxy of states a far more constructive force in the public life of the nation than it has been during the past half century. The South will be more influential in American national politics when it ceases to be solid, if it ever does. The two issues which have caused the most bitterness in our political life during the past hundred years are neither the tariff, nor free silver, nor farm relief, but slavery and the freedom of Ireland. Both had a racial basis.

Then there is the division between capital and labor, employer and employed, classes and masses. Many attempts have been made in the United States to gather all the industrial workers into a single political group and set them up against "the interests"; but so far without much success. The labor vote has never been captured in its entirety by either of the major party organizations; on the contrary it is fairly well divided between them, if one surveys the country as a whole. The same is true of the men who till the soil. In the years immediately following the close of the World War it was hoped in some quarters that a powerful Farmer-Labor party could be created and that by drawing into its fold the two largest occupational elements in the American electorate this new party could make itself dominant at the polls. But the movement proved to be a flop. Neither group was willing to cast its old allegiance aside.

It is quite true, no doubt, that if the farmers and industrial

workers of the United States could be welded into a single organization there would not be much chance for the rest of us; but such a permanent combination is virtually inconceivable, because the immediate interests of the two groups are diametrically opposed at almost every point. The farmer's ambition is to keep the price of food stuffs up and the price of manufactured products down. The industrial worker wants this program turned end for end. The farmer wants transportation rates lowered, with a corresponding reduction in the wages of railroad labor. The four big brotherhoods are not likely to be thrilled by that program. Thus the two numerically strongest pressure groups in the United States, farmers and workers, are set in straight juxtaposition by their diverging economic interests and this precludes any lasting political alliance between them.

People often speak of capitalism as a unified factor in American life. The business interests are assumed to be thoroughly solid by those who seek to hold them up as a political ogre. But the split in their ranks is as great as anywhere else. There are the independent banks, for example, and the chain banks—with no love lost between the two. They have carried their battle to the floor of Congress. The chain stores, as everyone knows, have split the mercantile interest in twain and by reason of the antagonism which they have created are now facing an attempt to curb them through the process of discriminatory taxation. Big and little oil companies, shoe factories, power plants, and all the rest are in the strongest kind of rivalry. Far from being integrated, the so-called "interests" are perhaps the most hopelessly divided grouping that we have. Their apparent inability to get together on any kind of constructive program in the present emergency is proof of it.

### III

Then we have the set-off of the rural areas against the large urban centers, a *vis-à-vis* which is born of mutual suspicion and distrust. It crops out at every legislative session with the arraying of upstate against downstate, or the big cities against the rest of the commonwealth. The rural voter mistrusts the city, its motives, its methods, and its mayor. It is not a mere accident that the political complexion of the larger cities is so often different from that of the states in which they are located. It is because the rural voter and the small town voter believe their interests to be different from those of the electorate in the leviathan communities. So trammels

demanded by the *âme rigide*, the bucolic conscience, are written into the city charters.

Slouch-hatted Solons from the cow counties insist on putting the metropolitan communities under bonds for good behavior. Even when the cities have grown to equal or outrank the rest of the state in point of population they often manage to do this because of discriminatory provisions which are anchored in the State Constitution. Baltimore, for example, has half the population of Maryland, but elects only one-fifth of the Senators in that state. Rhode Island allows Providence only one Senator; on a population basis it would be entitled to sixteen. In New York State the provision that each county, irrespective of population, shall have at least one assemblyman is the device used for preserving the lower house from the clutches of the metropolis. No one can understand our state politics unless he keeps constantly in mind this conflict of urban and rural which often overshadows the party rivalry.

On a larger scale, and hardly less intense, is the mistrust with which New York City is regarded by the rest of the country. Americans of the hinterland look upon this throbbing wen of humanity as a place apart. Thousands of them go to it, from time to time, as to foreign soil, with the thrill of getting something new, bizarre, different, and indeed un-American. In the imagination of the country at large, New York is a place with a boundless ambition to rule and to dominate the whole country's politics, finance, opinion, and morals. The rest of the land is not minded to let it do anything of the sort.

A candidate for the Presidency, if he comes from New York City, has something to live down. In the great domain of Yokeldom it is the fashion to hold Wall Street responsible for most of the nation's grief—especially in these days when book values are sometimes written off at the rate of a billion a day. The regionalized structure of the Federal Reserve bank system, as Congress has devised it, is a monument to the distrust with which the rest of the country regards a place which in any other nation would be assigned its financial hegemony without question.

Macaulay once said that all men are divided by temperament into two classes, and only two, that is, conservatives and liberals. Every country has these two elements, no matter by what names they may be disguised. In the United States the congenital conservatives and liberals are probably not widely apart in their numerical strength; but they are rather unevenly distributed in the existing political organizations and in the territorial regions.

Liberalism in virtually all its phases has its least strength in the South and its greatest in the Far West. This seems to be true in politics, religion, education, and social relations. If we were to have a reorganization of our major political parties on lines which Professor John Dewey and others have proposed it is by no means certain that the Liberals would do otherwise than replace the Democrats as the party which is habitually out of power.

Overlapping all these fundamental divisions, which are more or less permanent, we have an even longer number which come into being when issues arise and then fade out when the controversies are closed. The free silver question, back in the nineties, inspired groupings which have now disappeared. Prohibition has taken its place to-day as the chief destroyer of well-built political fences. But the present division of the American people into wet and dry camps is very different from anything that we have ever had before. It does not strictly follow regional lines, or vocational, or racial, much less is it a matter of social status. There are dissensions on this issue even in the same family. No other question of public policy since slavery days has made such strange bed-fellows as this one—with society leaders and even clergymen sometimes pleading the cause of publicans and sinners, while bootlegging interests are contributing funds for the protection of the Eighteenth Amendment. Whatever may be said of prohibition as a moral issue, its enforcement has at any rate drawn more brains and money into the business of violating the law than any other piece of legislation has ever done in the history of mankind.

#### IV

So we have a union without unity of ideals, interests, attitude, or opinion. On scarcely anything is there a consensus among our people. This is because of our relatively brief history as a nation, our sectional differentiation, and our racial admixture. We have no common background in which the whole people can take pride. All this makes leadership difficult and fosters the acceptance of national policies which are largely the product of compromise. No movement can proceed very far in the United States without encountering an adverse current which slackens its progress or stalls it altogether. Not alone the Constitution, but the country is full of checks and balances.

Yet as a nation we hold together amazingly. In their spirit of nationalism the people of the United States are not outmatched by any other. This is in part because of our physical isolation,

on a huge island between the world's two largest oceans, far removed from all the other powerful nations of the earth. This isolation has developed nationalism at the expense of internationalism in America. For most of our people the horizon stops at the water's edge.

Something may also be attributed to the fact that we are, in an economic sense, virtually self-sufficient and independent. There are no necessities of life, and few luxuries, which the United States cannot produce within her own borders. Raw materials are found, manufactured, marketed, and consumed—all within one jurisdiction. This brings home to us a certain larger sense of unity in economic interest, despite the lesser internal divisions, and we protect it by a towering tariff wall. As a corollary all parts of the nation are commercially interdependent. The free flow of trade within continental United States, from Atlantic to Pacific and from the Canadian border to the Gulf, is the most powerful unifying force we have. A larger volume of trade passes back and forth through this area than in all the countries of Europe put together. In that sense we are the primate among free-trade nations, although commonly regarded as the world's foremost exponent of protectionist policy.

*E pluribus unum.* The accent is on the *pluribus*. Let us hope that it will stay there. Nothing could be more detrimental to the national stability than that every American should become a "hundred per cent American," as some of our super-patriots would have it. For this would mean that people have ceased to differ, and when they have ceased to differ they have ceased to think. A continued vigorous development of group-distinctiveness is our most dependable safeguard against mass action dictated by mob psychology. To stay united, let us endeavor to keep disunited.

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# Sentimental America

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

The Oriental may be inscrutable, but he is no more puzzling than the average American. We admit that we are hard, keen, practical,—the adjectives that every casual European applies to us,—and yet any bookstore window or railway news-stand will show that we prefer sentimental magazines and books. Why should a hard race—if we are hard—read soft books?

By soft books, by sentimental books, I do not mean only the kind of literature best described by the word “squashy.” I doubt whether we write or read more novels and short stories of the tear-dripped or hyperemotional variety than other nations. Germany is—or was—full of such soft stuff. It is highly popular in France, although the excellent taste of French criticism keeps it in check. Italian popular literature exudes sentiment; and the sale of “squashy” fiction in England is said to be threatened only by an occasional importation of an American “best-seller.” We have no bad eminence here. Sentimentalists with enlarged hearts are international in habitat, although, it must be admitted, especially popular in America.

When a critic, after a course in American novels and magazines, declares that life, as it appears on the printed page here, is fundamentally sentimentalized, he goes much deeper than “mushiness” with his charge. He means, I think, that there is an alarming tendency in American fiction to dodge the facts of life—or to pervert them. He means that in most popular books only red-blooded, optimistic people are welcome. He means that material success, physical soundness, and the gratification of the emotions have the right of way. He means that men and women (except the comic figures) shall be presented, not as they are, but as we should like to have them, according to a judgment tempered by nothing more searching than our experience with an unusually comfortable, safe, and prosperous mode of living. Every one succeeds in American plays and stories—if not by good thinking, why then by good looks or good luck. A curious society the research student of a later date might make of it—an upper world of the colorless successful, illustrated by chance-saved collar advertisements and magazine covers; an underworld of grotesque scamps, clowns, and

hyphenates drawn from the comic supplement; and all—red-blooded hero and modern gargoyle alike—always in good humor.

I am not touching in this picture merely to attack it. It has been abundantly attacked; what it needs is definition. For there is much in this bourgeois, good-humored American literature of ours which rings true, which is as honest an expression of our individuality as was the more austere product of antebellum New England. If American sentimentality does invite criticism, American sentiment deserves defense.

Sentiment—the response of the emotions to the appeal of human nature—is cheap, but so are many other good things. The best of the ancients were rich in it. Homer's chieftains wept easily. So did Shakespeare's heroes. Adam and Eve shed "some natural tears" when they left the Paradise which Milton imagined for them. A heart accessible to pathos, to natural beauty, to religion, was a chief requisite for the protagonist of Victorian literature. Even Becky Sharp was touched—once—by Amelia's moving distress.

Americans, to be sure, do not weep easily; but if they make equivalent responses to sentiment, that should not be held against them. If we like "sweet" stories, or "strong"—which means emotional—stories, our taste is not thereby proved to be hopeless, or our national character bad. It is better to be creatures of even sentimental sentiment with the author of "The Rosary," than to see the world *only* as it is portrayed by the pens of Bernard Shaw and Anatole France. The first is deplorable; the second is dangerous. I should deeply regret the day when a simple story of honest American manhood winning a million and a sparkling, piquant sweetheart lost all power to lull my critical faculty and warm my heart. I doubt whether any literature has ever had too much of honest sentiment.

Good Heavens! Because some among us insist that the mystic rose of the emotions shall be painted a brighter pink than nature allows, are the rest to forego glamour? Or because, to view the matter differently, psychology has shown what happens in the brain when a man falls in love, and anthropology has traced marriage to a care for property rights, are we to suspect the idyllic in literature wherever we find it? Life is full of the idyllic; and no anthropologist will ever persuade the reasonably romantic youth that the sweet and chivalrous passion which leads him to mingle reverence with desire for the object of his affections, is nothing but an idealized property sense. Origins explain very little, after all.

The bilious critics of sentiment in literature have not even honest science behind them.

I have no quarrel with traffickers in simple emotion—with such writers as James Lane Allen and James Whitcomb Riley, for example. But the average American is not content with such sentiment as theirs. He wishes a more intoxicating brew, he desires to be persuaded that, once you step beyond your own experience, feeling rules the world. He wishes—I judge by what he reads—to make sentiment at least ninety per cent efficient, even if a dream-America, superficially resemblant to the real, but far different in tone, must be created by the obedient writer in order to satisfy him. His sentiment has frequently to be sentimentalized before he will pay for it. And to this fault, which he shares with other modern races, he adds the other heinous sin of sentimentalism, the refusal to face the facts.

This sentimentalizing of reality is far more dangerous than the romantic sentimentalizing of the “squashy” variety. It is to be found in sex-stories which carefully observe decency of word and deed, where the conclusion is always in accord with conventional morality, yet whose characters are clearly immoral, indecent, and would so display themselves if the tale were truly told. It is to be found in stories of “big business” where trickery and rascality are made virtuous at the end by sentimental baptism. If I choose for the hero of my novel a director in an American trust; if I make him an accomplice in certain acts of ruthless economic tyranny; if I make it clear that at first he is merely subservient to a stronger will; and that the acts he approves are in complete disaccord with his private moral code—why then, if the facts should be dragged to the light, if he is made to realize the exact nature of his career, how can I end my story? It is evident that my hero possesses little insight and less firmness of character. He is not a hero; he is merely a tool. In, let us say, eight cases out of ten, his curve is already plotted. It leads downward—not necessarily along the villain’s path, but toward moral insignificance.

And yet, I cannot end my story that way for Americans. There *must* be a grand moral revolt. There must be resistance, triumph, and not only spiritual, but also financial recovery. And this, likewise, is sentimentality. Even Booth Tarkington, in his excellent “Turmoil,” had to dodge the logical issue of his story; had to make his hero exchange a practical literary idealism for a very impractical, even though a commercial, utopianism, in order to emerge apparently successful at the end of the book. A story such as the

Danish Nexö's "Pelle the Conqueror," where pathos and the idyllic, each intense, each beautiful, are made convincing by an undeviating truth to experience, would seem to be almost impossible of production just now in America.

It is not enough to rail at this false fiction. The chief duty of criticism is to explain. The best corrective of bad writing is a knowledge of why it is bad. We get the fiction we deserve, precisely as we get the government we deserve—or perhaps, in each case, a little better. Why are we sentimental? When that question is answered, it is easier to understand the defects and the virtues of American fiction. And the answer lies in the traditional American philosophy of life.

To say that the American is an idealist is to commit a thoroughgoing platitude. Like most platitudes, the statement is annoying because from one point of view it is indisputably just, while from another it does not seem to fit the facts. With regard to our tradition, it is indisputable. Of the immigrants who since the seventeenth century have been pouring into this continent a proportion large in number, larger still in influence, has been possessed of motives which in part at least were idealistic. If it was not the desire for religious freedom that urged them, it was the desire for personal freedom; if not political liberty, why then economic liberty (for this too is idealism), and the opportunity to raise the standard of life. And of course all these motives were strongest in that earlier immigration which has done most to fix the state of mind and body which we call being American. I need not labor the argument. Our political and social history support it; our best literature demonstrates it, for no men have been more idealistic than the American writers whom we have consented to call great. Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Whitman—was idealism ever more thoroughly incarnate than in them?

And this idealism—to risk again a platitude—has been in the air of America. It has permeated our religious sects, and created several of them. It has given tone to our thinking, and even more to our feeling. I do not say that it has always, or even usually, determined our actions, although the Civil War is proof of its power. Again and again it has gone aground roughly when the ideal met a condition of living—a fact that will provide the explanation for which I seek. But optimism, "boosting," muck-raking (not all of its manifestations are pretty), social service, religious, municipal, democratic reform, indeed the "uplift" generally, is evidence of the vigor, the

bumptiousness of the inherited American tendency to pursue the ideal. No one can doubt that in 1918 we believed, at least, in idealism.

Nevertheless, so far as the average individual is concerned, with just his share and no more of the race-tendency, this idealism has been suppressed, and in some measure perverted. It is this which explains, I think, American sentimentalism.

Consider, for example, the ethics of conventional American society. The American ethical tradition is perfectly definite and tremendously powerful. It belongs, furthermore, to a population far larger than the "old American" stock, for it has been laboriously inculcated in our schools and churches, and impressively driven home by newspaper, magazine, and book. I shall not presume to analyze it save where it touches literature. There it maintains a definite attitude toward all sex-problems: the Victorian, which is not necessarily, or even probably, a bad one. Man should be chaste, and proud of his chastity. Woman must be so. It is the ethical duty of the American to hate, or at least to despise, all deviations, and to pretend—for the greater prestige of the law—that such sinning is exceptional, at least in America. And this is the public morality he believes in, whatever may be his private experience in actual living. In business, it is the ethical tradition of the American, inherited from a rigorous Protestant morality, to be square, to play the game without trickery, to fight hard but never meanly. Over-reaching is justifiable when the other fellow has equal opportunities to be "smart"; lying, tyranny—never. And though the opposites of all these laudable practices come to pass, he must frown on them in public, deny their rightness even to the last cock-crow—especially in the public press.

American political history is a long record of idealistic tendencies toward democracy working painfully through a net of graft, pettiness, sectionalism, and bravado, with constant disappointment for the idealist who believes, traditionally, in the intelligence of the crowd. American social history is a glaring instance of how the theory of equal dignity for all men can entangle itself with caste distinctions, snobbery, and the power of wealth. American economic history betrays the pioneer helping to kick down the ladder which he himself had raised toward equal opportunity for all. American literary history—especially contemporary literary history—reflects the result of all this for the American mind. The sentimental in our literature is a direct consequence.

The disease is easily acquired. Mr. Smith, a broker, finds himself in an environment of "schemes" and "deals" in which the qual-

ity of mercy is strained, and the wind is decidedly not tempered to the shorn lamb. After all, business is business. He shrugs his shoulders and takes his part. But his unexpended fund of native idealism—if, as is most probable, he has his share—seeks its due satisfaction. He cannot use it in business; so he takes it out in a novel or a play where, quite contrary to his observed experience, ordinary people like himself act nobly, with a success that is all the more agreeable for being unexpected. His wife, a woman with strange stirrings about her heart, with motions toward beauty, and desires for a significant life and rich, satisfying experience, exists in day-long pettiness, gossips, frivols, scolds, with money enough to do what she pleases, and nothing vital to do. She also relieves her pent-up idealism in plays or books—in high-wrought, “strong” novels, not in adventures in society such as the kitchen admires, but in stories with violent moral and emotional crises, whose characters, no matter how unlikelike, have “strong” thoughts, and make vital decisions; succeed or fail significantly. Her brother, the head of a wholesale dry-goods firm, listens to the stories the drummers bring home of night life on the road, laughs, says to himself regretfully that the world has to be like that; and then, in logical reaction, demands purity and nothing but aggressive purity in the books of the public library.

The hard man goes in for philanthropy (never before so frequently as in America); the one-time “boss” takes to picture-collecting; the railroad wrecker gathers rare editions of the Bible; and tens of thousands of humbler Americans carry their inherited idealism into the necessarily sordid experiences of life in an imperfectly organized country, suppress it for fear of being thought “cranky” or “soft,” and then, in their imagination and all that feeds their imagination, give it vent. You may watch the process any evening at the “movies” or the melodrama, on the trolley-car or in the easy chair at home.

This philosophy of living which I have called American idealism is in its own nature sound, as is proved in a hundred directions where it has had full play. Suppressed idealism, like any other suppressed desire, becomes unsound. And here lies the ultimate cause of the taste for sentimentalism in the American *bourgeoisie*. An undue insistence upon happy endings, regardless of the premises of the story, and a craving for optimism everywhere, anyhow, are sure signs of a “morbid complex,” and to be compared with some justice to the craving for drugs in an alcoholic deprived of liquor. No one can doubt the effect of the suppression by the Puritan disci-

pline of that instinctive love of pleasure and liberal experience common to us all. Its unhealthy reaction is visible in every old American community. No one who faces the facts can deny the result of the suppression by commercial, bourgeois, prosperous America of our native idealism. The student of society may find its dire effects in politics, in religion, and in social intercourse. The critic cannot overlook them in literature; for it is in the realm of the imagination that idealism, direct or perverted, does its best or its worst.

Sentiment is not perverted idealism. Sentiment *is* idealism, of a mild and not too masculine variety. If it has sins, they are sins of omission, not commission. Our fondness for sentiment proves that our idealism, if a little loose in the waist-band and puffy in the cheeks, is still hearty, still capable of active mobilization, like those comfortable French husbands whose plump and smiling faces, careless of glory, careless of everything but thrift and good living, one used to see figured on a page whose superscription read, "Dead on the field of honor."

The novels, the plays, the short stories, of sentiment may prefer sweetness, perhaps, to truth, the feminine to the masculine virtues, but we waste ammunition in attacking them. There never was, I suppose, a great literature of sentiment, for not even "The Sentimental Journey" is truly great. But no one can make a diet exclusively of "noble" literature; the charming has its own cozy corner across from the tragic (and a much bigger corner at that). Our uncounted amorists of tail-piece song and illustrated story provide the readiest means of escape from the somewhat uninspiring life that most men and women are living just now in America.

The sentimental, however,—whether because of an excess of sentiment softening into "slush," or of a morbid optimism, or of a weak-eyed distortion of the facts of life,—is perverted. It needs to be cured, and its cure is more truth. But this cure, I very much fear, is not entirely, or even chiefly, in the power of the "regular practitioner," the honest writer. He can be honest; but if he is much more honest than his readers, they will not read him. As Professor Lounsbury once said, a language grows corrupt only when its speakers grow corrupt, and mends, strengthens, and becomes pure with them. So with literature. We shall have less sentimentality in American literature when our accumulated store of idealism disappears in a laxer generation; or when it finds due vent in a more responsible, less narrow, less monotonously prosperous life than is lived by the average reader of fiction in America. I would rather see our literary taste damned forever than have the first

alternative become—as it has not yet—a fact. The second, in these years rests upon the knees of the gods.

All this must not be taken in too absolute a sense. There are medicines, and good ones, in the hands of writers and of critics, to abate, if not to heal, this plague of sentimentalism. I have stated ultimate causes only. They are enough to keep the mass of Americans reading sentimentalized fiction until some fundamental change has come, not strong enough to hold back the van of American writing, which is steadily moving toward restraint, sanity, and truth. Every honest composition is a step forward in the cause; and every clear-minded criticism.

But one must doubt the efficacy, and one must doubt the healthiness, of reaction into cynicism and sophisticated cleverness. There are curious signs, especially in what we may call the literature of New York, of a growing sophistication that sneers at sentiment and the sentimental alike. "Magazines of cleverness" have this for their keynote, although as yet the satire is not always well aimed. There are abundant signs that the generation just coming forward will rejoice in such a pose. It is observable now in the colleges, where the young literati turn up their noses at everything American,—magazines, best-sellers, or one-hundred-night plays,—and resort for inspiration to the English school of anti-Victorians: to Remy de Gourmont, to Anatole France. Their pose is not altogether to be blamed, and the men to whom they resort are models of much that is admirable; but there is little promise for American literature in exotic imitation. To see ourselves prevailing as others see us may be good for modesty, but does not lead to a self-confident native art. And it is a dangerous way for Americans to travel. We cannot afford such sophistication yet. The English wits experimented with cynicism in the court of Charles II, laughed at blundering Puritan morality, laughed at country manners, and were whiffed away because the ideals they laughed at were better than their own. Idealism is not funny, however censurable its excesses. As a race we have too much sentiment to be frightened out of the sentimental by a blasé cynicism.

At first glance the flood of moral literature now upon us—social-conscience stories, scientific plays, platitudinous "moralities" that tell us how to live—may seem to be another protest against sentimentalism. And that the French and English examples have been so warmly welcomed here may seem another indication of a reaction on our part. I refer especially to "hard" stories, full of vengeful wrath, full of warnings for the race that dodges the facts of life.

H. G. Wells is the great exemplar, with his sociological studies wrapped in description and tied with a plot. In a sense, such stories are certainly to be regarded as a protest against truth-dodging, against cheap optimism, against "slacking," whether in literature or in life. But it would be equally just to call them another result of suppressed idealism, and to regard their popularity in America as proof of the argument which I have advanced in this essay. Excessively didactic literature is often a little unhealthy. In fresh periods, when life runs strong and both ideals and passions find ready issue into life, literature has no burdensome moral to carry. It digests its moral. Homer digested his morals. They transfuse his epics. So did Shakespeare.

Not so with the writers of the social-conscience school. They are in a rage over wicked, wasteful man. Their novels are bursted notebooks—sometimes neat and orderly notebooks, like Mr. Galsworthy's or our own Ernest Poole's, sometimes haphazard ones, like those of Mr. Wells, but always explosive with reform. These gentlemen know very well what they are about, especially Mr. Wells, the lesser artist, perhaps, as compared with Galsworthy, but the shrewder and possibly the greater man. The very sentimentalists, who go to novels to exercise the idealism which they cannot use in life, will read these unsentimental stories, although their lazy impulses would never spur them on toward any truth not sweetened by a tale.

And yet, one feels that the social attack might have been more convincing if free from its compulsory service to fiction; that these novels and plays might have been better literature if the authors did not study life in order that they might be better able to preach. Wells and Galsworthy also have suffered from suppressed idealism, although it would be unfair to say that perversion was the result. So have our muck-rakers, who, very characteristically, exhibit the disorder in a more complex and a much more serious form, since to a distortion of facts they have often enough added hypocrisy and commercialism. It is part of the price we pay for being sentimental.

If I am correct in my analysis, we are suffering here in America, not from a plague of bad taste merely, nor only from a lack of real education among our myriads of readers, nor from decadence—least of all, this last. It is a disease of our own particular virtue which has infected us—idealism, suppressed and perverted. A less commercial, more responsible America, perhaps a less prosperous and more spiritual America, will hold fast to its sentiment, but be weaned from its sentimentality.

*Definitions*, 1922

# The Myth of Rugged American Individualism

CHARLES A. BEARD

## I

"The house of bishops would be as much at sea in Minneapolis as at Atlantic City." This bit of delicious humor, all too rare in America's solemn assemblies, sparkled at a tense moment in the late conference of the Episcopalian magnates at Denver when the respective merits of the two cities as future meeting places were under debate. But the real cause of the caustic comment seems to have been a heated discussion, led by the Honorable George W. Wickersham, over a dangerous proposal to modify, not the Volstead Act, but the sacred creed of rugged American individualism.

That contest had been precipitated by the report of a special commission in which occurred these highly inflammatory words: "It is becoming increasingly evident that the conception of society as made up of autonomous, independent individuals is as faulty from the point of view of economic realism as it is from the standpoint of Christian idealism. Our fundamental philosophy of rugged individualism must be modified to meet the needs of a co-operative age." This frightful conclusion flowed from a fact statement which the commission summarized in the following language: "Side by side with such misery and idleness, there are warehouses bursting with goods which cannot be bought; elevators full of wheat while bread lines haunt our cities; carefully protected machinery lying idle, while jobless men throng our streets; money in the banks available at low rates."

These shocking passages Mr. Wickersham read to the assembled delegates with considerable indignation, and denied their truth. Then he added an illuminating exposition all his own: "I think this is an expression of a social philosophy that is expressed by the Soviet Government of Russia. It is a negation of the whole concept of American civilization. I think it would be a sad day when the American people abandon the principles on which they have grown to greatness." Coming to specifications, he particularly attacked a point in the report, that "compulsory unemployment insurance is

feasible." Realizing that Mr. Wickersham was a specialist in individualism, since he was the chief author of a collective report from which each individual signer apparently dissented, the congregated deputies at Denver voted down the proposal that the commission's statement should be taken as "representing the mind of the Church," and substituted a mere pious recommendation that it should be given "careful consideration" by members of the Church. Such, at least, is the story reported in the press.

This is only one of many straws in the wind indicating a movement to exalt rugged individualism into a national taboo beyond the reach of inquiring minds. From day to day it becomes increasingly evident that some of our economic leaders (by no means all of them) are using the phrase as an excuse for avoiding responsibility, for laying the present depression on "Government interference," and for seeking to escape from certain forms of taxation and regulation which they do not find to their interest. If a smoke screen big enough can be laid on the land, our commercial prestidigitators may work wonders—for themselves.

Still more direct evidence confirms this view. For example, in the autumn of 1930, a New York bank published, as a kind of revelation from on high, a slashing attack on "Government interference with business," written by that stanch English Whig, Macaulay, a hundred years ago; and a few weeks later one of the leading advertising firms took a whole page in the *New York Times* to blazon forth the creed anew under the captivating head: "Cheer Up! Our Best Times Are Still Ahead of Us!" And the whole gospel was summed up in these words from Macaulay: "Our rulers will best promote the improvement of the people by strictly confining themselves to their own legitimate duties—by leaving capital to find its most lucrative course, commodities their fair price, industry and intelligence their natural reward, idleness and folly their natural punishment—by maintaining peace, by defending property, by diminishing the price of law, and by observing strict economy in every department of the State. Let the Government do this—the people will assuredly do the rest." In other words, here was put forth in the name of American business, with all the pontifical assurance that characterized Macaulay's shallowest sophistry, the pure creed of historic individualism, and here was served on the Government and people of the United States a warning revelation of confident expectations.

A year later, in a release to the press, Mr. Otto Kahn discussed the subject of planning and intimated that the fortunate position of

France today is to be ascribed to the fact that the French Government interferes less with business than does the Government of Germany or Great Britain, with the implication that the United States might profit from this experience. About the same time the Honorable Newton D. Baker made a long address at Williamstown which was evidently designed to show that nothing important could be done in the present crisis by the Federal Government, except perhaps in the way of tariff reduction by international agreement. And now comes from Chicago the announcement that a number of rugged business men are forming a national association to combat Government in business, to break up this unholy alliance. There is not a professional lunching-and-dining fellowship in America that is not now applauding to the echo such ringing cries as "Let Us Alone," "Take Government Out of Business," "Hands Off," "Unburden Capital." With an eye on such straws in the wind, President Hoover publicly states that all notions about planned economy come out of Russia, thus placing such distinguished men as Gerard Swope and Owen D. Young under the horrible Red ban. As one of the high-powered utility propagandists recently explained, the best way to discredit an opponent is to pin a Red tag on him—without reference to his deserts, of course.

## II

Hence it is important to ask, calmly and without reference to election heats, just what all this means. In what way is the Government "in business" and how did it get there? Here we climb down out of the muggy atmosphere of controversy and face a few stubborn facts. They are entered in the indubitable records of the Government of the United States and are as evident as the hills to them that have eyes to see. Let us catalogue a few of them *seriatim* for the first time in the history of this adventure in logomachy.

I. Government Regulation of Railways, from 1887 to the last Act of Congress. How did the Government get into this business? The general cause was the conduct of railway corporations under the rule of rugged individualism—rebates, pools, stock watering, bankruptcy-juggling, all the traffic will bear, savage rate slashing, merciless competition, and the rest of it. If anyone wants to know the facts, let him read the history of railroading in the sixties, seventies, and early eighties, or, if time is limited, the charming illustrations presented in Charles Francis Adams' "A Chapter of Erie." And what was the immediate cause of the Government's intervention? The insistence of business men, that is, shippers, who were harassed

and sometimes ruined by railway tactics, and of farmers, the most rugged of all the rugged individualists the broad land of America has produced. And the result? Let the gentle reader compare the disastrous railway bankruptcies that flowed from the panic of 1873, including bloodshed and arson, with the plight of railways now, bad as it is. Government regulation is not a utopian success, but it is doubtful whether any of our great business men would like to get the Government entirely out of this business and return to the magnificent anarchy of Jay Gould's age. President Hoover has not even suggested it.

2. Waterways. Since its foundation the Government has poured hundreds of millions into rivers, harbors, canals, and other internal improvements. It is still pouring in millions. Some of our best economists have denounced it as wasteful and have demonstrated that most of it does not pay in any sense of the word. But President Hoover, instead of leaving this work to private enterprise, insists on projecting and executing the most elaborate undertakings, in spite of the fact that some of them are unfair if not ruinous to railways. Who is back of all this? Business men and farmers who want lower freight rates. There is not a chamber of commerce on any Buck Creek in America that will not cheer until tonsils are cracked any proposal to make the said creek navigable. Dredging companies want the good work to go on, and so do the concerns that make dredging machinery. Farmers are for it also and they are, as already said, the ruggedest of rugged individuals—so rugged in fact that the vigorous efforts of the Farm Board to instill co-operative reason into them have been almost as water on a duck's back.

3. The United States Barge Corporation. Who got the Government into the job of running barges on some of its improved waterways? Certainly not the socialists, but good Republicans and Democrats speaking for the gentlemen listed under 2 above.

4. The Shipping Business. The World War was the occasion, but not the cause of this departure. For more than half a century the politicians of America fought ship subsidies against business men engaged in the shipbuilding and allied industries. At last, under the cover of war necessities, the Government went into the shipping business, with cheers from business. Who is back of the huge expenditures for the merchant marine? Business men. Who supports huge subsidies under the guise of "lucrative mail contracts," making a deficit in postal finances to be used as proof that the Government cannot run any business? Business men clamor for these mail subsidies and receive them. Who put the Government into the business

of providing cheap money for shipbuilding? Business men did it. Those who are curious to know how these things were done may profitably read the sworn testimony presented during the investigation of W. B. Shearer's patriotic labors on behalf of the shipbuilding interests, especially the exhibits showing how money was spent like water "educating" politicians. Who wants navy officers on half pay to serve on privately owned ships? Business men. Who wants the Government to keep on operating ships on "pioneer" lines that do not pay? Business men. And when the United States Senate gets around to investigating this branch of business, it will find more entertainment than the Trade Commission has found in the utility inquest.

5. Aviation. The Government is "in" this business. It provides costly airway services free of charge and subsidizes air mail. Who is behind this form of Government enterprise? Gentlemen engaged in aviation and the manufacture of planes and dirigibles. Then the Government helps by buying planes for national defense. Who is opposed to air mail subsidies? A few despised "politicians."

6. Canals. Who zealously supported the construction of the Panama Canal? Shippers on the Pacific Coast who did not like the railway rates. Also certain important shipping interests on both coasts—all controlled by business men. Who insisted that the Government should buy the Cape Cod Canal? The business men who put their money into the enterprise and found that it did not pay. Then they rejoiced to see the burden placed on the broad back of our dear Uncle Sam.

7. Highway Building. Who has supported Federal highway aid—the expenditure of hundreds of millions on roads, involving the taxation of railways to pay for ruinous competition? Everybody apparently, but specifically business men engaged in the manufacture and sale of automobiles and trucks. Who proposes to cut off every cent of that outlay? Echoes do not answer.

8. The Department of Commerce, its magnificent mansion near the Treasury Department, and its army of hustlers scouting for business at the uttermost ends of the earth. Who is responsible for loading on the Government the job of big drummer at large for business? Why shouldn't these rugged individualists do their own drumming instead of asking the taxpayers to do it for them? Business men have been behind this enormous expansion, and Mr. Hoover, as Secretary of Commerce, outdid every predecessor in the range of his activities and the expenditure of public money. Who

proposes to take the Government out of the business of hunting business for men who ought to know their own business?

9. The Big Pork Barrel—appropriations for public buildings, navy yards, and army posts. An interesting enterprise for the United States Chamber of Commerce would be to discover a single piece of pork in a hundred years that has not been approved by local business men as beneficiaries. When Ben Tillman shouted in the Senate that he intended to steal a hog every time a Yankee got a ham, he knew for whom the speaking was done.

10. The Bureau of Standards. Besides its general services, it renders valuable aid to business undertakings. Why shouldn't they do their own investigating at their own expense, instead of turning to the Government?

11. The Federal Trade Commission. Who runs there for rulings on "fair practices"? Weary consumers? Not often. Principally, business men who do not like to be outwitted or cheated by their competitors. If we are rugged individualists, why not let every individualist do as he pleases, without invoking Government intervention at public expense?

12. The Anti-Trust Acts. Business men are complaining against these laws on the ground that they cannot do any large-scale planning without incurring the risk of prosecution. The contention is sound, but who put these laws on the books and on what theory were they based? They were the product of a clamor on the part of farmers and business men against the practices of great corporations. Farmers wanted lower prices. Business men of the smaller variety objected to being undersold, beaten by clever tricks, or crushed to the wall by competitors with immense capital. And what was the philosophy behind the Sherman Act and the Clayton Act? Individualism, pure and undefiled. "The New Freedom" as President Wilson phrased it in literary language. "Break up the trusts and let each tub stand on its own bottom." That was the cry among little business men. As lawyers put it in their somber way, "the natural person's liberty should not be destroyed by artificial persons known as corporations created under the auspices of the State." Whether any particular business man is for or against the anti-trust laws depends upon his particular business and the state of its earnings.

13. The Tariff. On this tender subject it is scarcely possible to speak soberly. It seems safe to say, however, that if all the business men who demand this kind of "interference"—with the right of capital to find its most lucrative course, industry and intelligence their natural reward, commodities their fair price, and idleness and

folly their natural punishment—were to withdraw their support for protection, cease their insistence on it, then the politicians would probably reduce the levy or go over to free trade; with what effect on business no one can correctly predict. At all events there are thousands of business men who want to keep the Government in the business of protecting their business against foreign competition. If competition is good, why not stand up and take it?

14. The Federal Farm Board. This collectivist institution is the product of agrarian agitation, on the part of our most stalwart individualists, the free and independent farmers; but President Hoover sponsored it and signed the bill that created it. Now what is its avowed purpose as demonstrated by the language of the statute, the publications of the Farm Board, and the activities carried out under its auspices? It is primarily and fundamentally intended to stabilize prices and production through co-operative methods. And what has the Board done? It has encouraged the development of co-operation as distinguished from individualism among farmers; it has financed co-operative associations; it has denounced individualistic farmers who insist on growing as much as they please, and has tried to get them to increase their earnings by a common limitation of production. If the Agricultural Marketing Act means anything, if the procedure of the Farm Board is not a delusion, then co-operation is to be substituted for individualism in agricultural production and marketing. If there is ever to be a rational adjustment of supply to demand in this field, the spirit and letter of President Hoover's measure must be realized through organized action by millions of farmers under Federal auspices. The other alternative is simon-pure individualism: let each farmer produce what he likes, as much of it as he likes, and sell it at any price he can get. But under the happy title "Grow Less—Get More," the Farm Board has given instructions to farmers: "One thing the successful manufacturers learned long ago was that they could not make money when they produced more than they could sell at a profit." The obvious moral is for farmers to get together under Government leadership or hang separately.

15. The Moratorium and Frozen Assets. The latest form of Government interference with "the natural course" of economy is the suspension of payments due the United States from foreign powers on account of lawful debts and the proposal to give public support to "frozen assets." What was the source of inspiration here? American investment bankers having got themselves into a jam in their efforts to make easy money now demand government as-

sistance. In 1927 one of the most distinguished German economists told the writer of this article that the great game in his country, as in other parts of Europe, was to borrow billions from private bankers in the United States, so that it would ultimately be impossible to pay reparations, the debts due the Federal Government, *and* then the debts owed to private parties. The expected result? American bankers would then force their Government to forego its claims for the benefit of private operators who wanted to make bankers' commissions and eight or ten per cent on their money. Well, the game worked. American taxpayers are to be soaked and American bankers are to collect—perhaps.

And what is a "frozen asset"? It is a gaudy name for a piece of paper representing a transaction in which the holder expected to get a larger return than was possible on a prudent, rock-bottom investment. A Hartford, Connecticut, municipal four is not frozen; a holder can get better than par in the present dark hour of Wall Street's sorrows. A seven per cent Western farm mortgage is frozen tight—and ought to be, and the holder frozen with it. So is a Bolivian seven. Why should there be Federal interference to save investors from reaping the fruits of their folly and greed? No reason, except that the latter want the Government to bring home their cake so that they can eat it. The trouble is that American capital, in finding "its most lucrative course," has fallen into a slough, and if it gets out with its gains intact the Government must bring a derrick to hoist it.

### III

In this survey of a few leading economic activities of the Federal Government the emphasis is not critical; so far as the present argument is concerned, any or all of these functions may be justified with respect to national interest. Indeed it is difficult to find any undertaking of the Government which is not supported by some business men on the ground of national defense. In the early days of our history even those statesmen who generally espoused free trade or low tariffs were willing to concede the importance of making the nation independent in the manufacture of munitions of war. And in the latest hour, subsidies to the merchant marine, to aviation, and to waterways development are stoutly defended in the name of preparedness. Transforming a creek into a river navigable by outboard motor boats can be supported by military engineers on the theory that it gives them practice in their art. No; the emphasis here is not critical. The point is that the Federal Government

does not operate in a vacuum, but under impulsion from without; and all of the measures which put the Government into business have been supported by rugged individualists—business men or farmers or both. The current tendency to describe the Government as a meddling busybody, prying around and regulating for the mere pleasure of taking the joy out of somebody's life, betrays an ignorance of the facts in the case. The Government of the United States operates continually in the midst of the most powerful assembly of lobbyists the world has ever seen—the representatives of every business interest that has risen above the level of a corner grocery; and there is not a single form of Government interference with business that does not have the approval of one or more of these interests—except perhaps the taxation of income for the purpose, among other things, of paying the expenses of subsidizing and regulating business.

For forty years or more there has not been a President, Republican or Democratic, who has not talked against Government interference and then supported measures adding more interference to the huge collection already accumulated. Take, for instance, President Wilson. He made his campaign in 1912 on the classical doctrine of individualism; he blew mighty blasts in the name of his new freedom against the control of the Government by corporate wealth and promised to separate business and Government, thus setting little fellows free to make money out of little business. The heir of the Jeffersonian tradition, he decried paternalism of every kind. Yet look at the statutes enacted under his benign administration: the trainmen's law virtually fixing wages on interstate railways for certain classes of employees; the shipping board law; the Farm Loan Act; federal aid for highway construction; the Alaskan railway; the Federal Reserve Act; the Water Power Act; and all the rest of the bills passed during his régime. Only the Clayton anti-trust law can be called individualistic. No wonder Mr. E. L. Doheny exclaimed to Mr. C. W. Barron that President Wilson was a college professor gone Bolshevist! And why did Democrats who had been saying "the less government the better" operate on the theory that the more government the better? Simply because their mouths were worked by ancient memories and their actions were shaped by inexorable realities.

Then the Republicans came along in 1921 and informed the country that they were going back to normalcy, were determined to take the Government out of business. Well, did they repeal a single one of the important measures enacted during the eight years of Presi-

dent Wilson's rule? It would be entertaining to see the sanhedrim of the United States Chamber of Commerce trying to make out a list of laws repealed in the name of normalcy and still more entertaining to watch that august body compiling a list of additional laws interfering with "the natural course of business" enacted since 1921. Heirs of the Hamiltonian tradition, the Republicans were not entitled to talk about separating the Government from business. Their great spiritual teacher, Daniel Webster, a pupil of Hamilton, had spoken truly when he said that one of the great reasons for framing the Constitution was the creation of a government that could regulate commerce. They came honestly by subsidies, bounties, internal improvements, tariffs, and other aids to business. What was the trouble with them in the age of normalcy? Nothing; they just wanted their kind of government intervention in the "natural cause of industry." Evidently, then, there is some confusion on this subject of individualism, and it ought to be examined dispassionately in the light of its history with a view to discovering its significance and its limitations; for there is moral danger in saying one thing and doing another—at all events too long.

#### IV

Historically speaking, there are two schools of individualism: one American, associated with the name of Jefferson, and the other English, associated with the name of Cobden. The former was agrarian in interest, the latter capitalistic. Jefferson wanted America to be a land of free, upstanding farmers with just enough government to keep order among them; his creed was an agrarian creed nicely fitted to a civilization of sailing ships, ox carts, stagecoaches, wooden plows, tallow dips, and home-made bacon and sausages; and since most of the people in the United States, during the first century of their independence, were engaged in agriculture, they thought highly of Jefferson's praise of agriculture and his doctrine of anarchy plus the police constable. Cobden's individualism was adapted to capitalist England at the middle of the nineteenth century—early industrial England. At that moment his country was the workshop of the world, was mistress of the world market in manufactured commodities, and feared no competition from any foreign country. English capitalists thus needed no protective tariffs and subsidies and, therefore, wanted none. Hence they exalted free trade to the level of a Mosaic law, fixed and eternal. They wanted to employ labor on their own terms and turn working people out to starve when no profitable business was at hand; so they quite

naturally believed that any government interference with their right to do as they pleased was "bad." Their literary apologist, Macaulay, clothed their articles of faith in such magnificent rhetoric that even the tireddest business man could keep awake reading it at night.

Closely examined, what is this creed of individualism? Macaulay defines it beautifully in the passage which the New York bank and our happy advertising agency quoted so joyously. Let the Government maintain peace, defend property, reduce the cost of litigation, and observe economy in expenditure—that is all. Do American business men want peace all the time, in Nicaragua, for instance, when their undertakings are disturbed? Or in Haiti or Santo Domingo? Property must be defended, of course. But whose property? And what about the cost of litigation and economy in expenditures? If they would tell their hired men in law offices to cut the costs of law, something might happen. As for expenditures, do they really mean to abolish subsidies, bounties, and appropriations-in-aid from which they benefit? Speaking brutally, they do not. That is not the kind of economy in expenditures which they demand; they prefer to cut off a few dollars from the Children's Bureau.

Then comes Macaulay's system of private economy: let capital find its most lucrative course alone, unaided: no Government tariffs, subsidies, bounties, and special privileges. That is the first item. Do American business men who shout for individualism believe in that? Certainly not. So that much is blown out of the water. Macaulay's next item is: let commodities find their fair price. Do the gentlemen who consolidate, merge, and make price understandings want to allow prices to take their "natural course"? By no means; they are trying to effect combinations that will hold prices up to the point of the largest possible profit. Macaulay's third item is: let industry and intelligence receive their natural reward. Whose industry and intelligence and what industry and intelligence? When these questions are asked all that was clear and simple dissolves in mist.

Then there is Macaulay's last item: let idleness and folly reap their natural punishment. That was a fundamental specification in the hill of Manchesterism. Malthus made it a law for the economists: the poor are poor because they have so many babies and are improvident; nothing can be done about it, at least by any Government, even though it enforces drastic measures against the spread of information on birth control. Darwin made a natural science of it: biology sanctified the tooth and claw struggle of business by proclaiming the eternal tooth and claw struggle of the jungle. If

the Government will do nothing whatever, all people will rise or sink to the level which their industry or idleness, their intelligence or folly commands. No distinction was made between those who were idle because they could find no work and those who just loved idleness for its own sake—either in slums or mansions. Those who hit bottom and starved simply deserved it. That is the good, sound, logical creed of simon-pure individualism which Herbert Spencer embedded in fifty pounds of printed matter. To him and all his devotees, even public schools and public libraries were anathema: let the poor educate themselves at their own expense; to educate them at public expense is robbery of the taxpayer—that industrious, intelligent, provident person who is entitled to keep his “natural reward.”

Do any stalwart individualists believe that simple creed now? Not in England, where Liberals, professing to carry on the Cobden-Bright tradition, vote doles for unemployed working people. Why not let idleness and folly get their natural punishment? Why not, indeed? There must be a reason. Either the individualists betray their own faith, or, as some wag has suggested, they are afraid that they might find themselves hanging to a lantern if they let the idle and the foolish starve, that is, reap the natural punishment prescribed by Macaulay. Nor do American individualists propose to let nature take her course in this country. There is no danger of revolution here; as Mr. Coolidge has said, “we have had our revolution”; yet business men agree with the politicians on feeding the hungry. It is true that they seem to be trying to obscure the issues and the facts by talking about the beneficence of private charity while getting most of the dole from public treasuries; but that is a detail. Although our rugged individualists advertise Macaulay’s creed, their faith in it appears to be shaky or their courage is not equal to their hopes. Then why should they try to delude themselves and the public?

There is another side to this stalwart individualism that also deserves consideration. Great things have been done in its name, no doubt, and it will always have its place in any reasoned scheme of thinking. Individual initiative and energy are absolutely indispensable to the successful conduct of any enterprise, and there is ample ground for fearing the tyranny and ineptitude of Governments. In the days of pioneering industry in England, in our pioneering days when forests were to be cut and mountain fastnesses explored, individualism was the great dynamic which drove enterprise forward. But on other pages of the doom book other entries must be

made. In the minds of most people who shout for individualism vociferously, the creed, stripped of all flashy rhetoric, means getting money, simply that and nothing more. And to this creed may be laid most of the shame that has cursed our cities and most of the scandals that have smirched our Federal Government.

That prince of bosses, Croker, put the individualist creed in its bare logical form when he said that he was working for his own pocket all the time, just as "every man in New York is working for his pocket." Fall, Doheny, and Sinclair were all splendid individualists; they explained that they hoped to make money out of their transactions, even while they covered their operations with the mantle of patriotism—national defense. Tammany judges, Connolly and his iron pipe, Doyle with his split fees, and policemen growing rich on vice are all individualists of the purest brand. W. B. Shearer collecting money from ship-building concerns to make a naval scare so that they might increase their profits belongs to the same school. Britten, bringing a fleet to Montauk Point to boom real estate in which he is interested, does nothing reprehensible under the Manchester creed; his capital is finding "its most lucrative course." Wilder and Bardo, representing shipping interests, when they spend money in Washington "educating" members of Congress, are following the law of the game. They are perfect individualists. The ruinous chaos in coal and oil is to be attributed to the same Darwinian morality. Finally, Al Capone, with his private enterprise in racketeering, is a supreme individualist: he wants no Government interference with his business, not even the collection of income taxes; if he is "let alone" he will take care of himself and give some money to soup kitchens besides.

The cold truth is that the individualist creed of everybody for himself and the devil take the hindmost is principally responsible for the distress in which Western civilization finds itself—with investment racketeering at one end and labor racketeering at the other. Whatever merits the creed may have had in days of primitive agriculture and industry, it is not applicable in an age of technology, science, and rationalized economy. Once useful, it has become a danger to society. Every thoughtful business man who is engaged in management as distinguished from stock speculation knows that stabilization, planning, orderly procedure, prudence, and the adjustment of production to demand are necessary to keep the economic machine running steadily and efficiently. Some of our most distinguished citizens—Owen D. Young, Gerard Swope, Nicholas Murray Butler, and Otto Kahn, for example—have, in effect,

warned the country that only by planning can industry avoid the kind of disaster from which we are now suffering; on all sides are signs of its coming—perhaps soon, perhaps late, but inevitably.

And all of them know that this means severe restraints on the anarchy celebrated in the name of individualism. The task before us, then, is not to furbish up an old slogan, but to get rid of it, to discover how much planning is necessary, by whom it can best be done, and what limitations must be imposed on the historic doctrine of Manchesterism. And to paraphrase Milton, methinks puissant America, mewing her mighty youth, will yet kindle her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam, purge and unscale her long abused sight, while timorous and flocking birds, with those that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms.

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# *Culture versus Colonialism in America*

HERBERT AGAR

Having been told many times that the future must be a strife between communism and fascism, a number of Americans are beginning to believe it. But their hearts are not given to either side; so the belief leads to pessimism, to the conviction that America is sold out and that there is nothing left to do but complain cleverly.

Such an attitude has the merit of completeness. It satisfies the part of the human mind that cries for an answer at any cost, even at the cost of suicide. But there is no excuse, as yet, for Americans to seek this shoddy comfort. We have a harder task and a more exciting. It is our job to save a corner of the world from the twin despotisms that encroach on Europe. If we do this we shall take a proud place in history. If we fail to do it we shall take no place at all; we shall just be a colony: a huge but awkward copy of the parent civilization.

If we are to seize our chance for greatness we must fight both the defeatism of the pessimists and the greedy optimism of those whose picture of a pretty future is a return to 1928. Our hope lies in the fact that we once had a political tradition which could give an answer in terms of freedom to this false fascist-or-communist dilemma. We have weakened that tradition shamefully, by taking its name in vain. We have betrayed it item by item while assuring each other that we were merely adapting it to the modern progress. It will not be easily revived today. Yet there is our job. All over the United States men are waking to that knowledge at last.

The first step toward reviving native America is to define it. And before it can be defined it has to be isolated. The "real" America, from which a native Culture can grow, has to be distinguished from colonial America which seeks only to copy Europe. The present essay tries to make this distinction even at the risk of overstating the differences.

During six years of living in England I learned one basic fact about my own country. I learned that the best traits in American life are not the traits we have copied faithfully from Europe but the traits we have freely adapted, or else originated—the traits which are our own. I learned that in so far as America is an imitation of Europe, she is not so good as the original. This merely means that

in so far as we are a colonial race we share the usual shortcomings of colonialism. "Society" life in the big cities of America is an example. "Society" has of course become ridiculous all over the Western world. The bourgeois revolution of the nineteenth century, the rise of stock-market wealth to a power and prestige overshadowing landed wealth, doomed urban "society" to a comic-section end. But granting that it is absurd everywhere, "society" in New York or Chicago is more absurd than in London. In London, something that once had dignity and purpose has grown sick and silly; in Chicago something sick and silly has been carefully improvised. A colonial status is a poor one at best; it becomes abject in a period when the model is not worth copying.

Modern American art offers a similar example. In so far as our art is a copy of French Modernism, it is colonial and inferior. As Mr. Thomas Craven writes:

Those who regard art as modish decoration, as inarticulate embellishment, have every reason to favor French Modernism, and every incentive to buy it. And it is more sensible to buy the original manufactures than the American imitations. Truly, they order these material things better in France. In the exhibition at the Chicago Fair, the French painters of the modern School of Paris made the American painters attached to that school look seedy and second-rate.

But there is another American art, such as that of Mr. Thomas Hart Benton, which has nothing to do with French Modernism, with Bohemia's abstract aloofness from Europe's passion and despair. This other art deals with American life; for side by side with our colonialism there is an America which makes an original contribution to the culture of Christendom.

The Colonial mind at its silliest is shown in our veneration for French cooking. Even in the South, where our native cooking will bear comparison with the cooking of any land, it is almost impossible in a first-class hotel to get anything but base imitations of the French. In a city of Tennessee, a hotel has carried this tendency one step further than is usual: over the door of its grillroom is a large sign reading *Le Grillé*. But even in this somberly named room, with its suggestion of a roasted heretic, the French cooking is vile and the American cooking does not exist. Presumably, the hotel managers know their business. Presumably, the traveling American public wants Parisian dishes even if they are always limp and tasteless, rather than American dishes to which the local cooks could do justice. But if this is true, the traveling public is colonial minded.

The town of Sheridan,<sup>1</sup> in the Middle West, illustrates the two Americas, and also the half-conscious fight taking place between them—a fight that will determine our future.

Sheridan is a suburb of one of our giant cities. Its population increased from thirty-seven thousand in 1920 to sixty-three thousand in 1930. But Sheridan is not yet “suburban.” Having a strong local pride it has thus far kept its own identity. It has not become merely another dormitory to the giant city. It still has the character of a Middle Western small town. But it will not have this character for long, if recent tendencies continue unchecked into the future. For Sheridan is living on its spiritual capital. It is using the virtues that are left over from the past rather than tending the soil from which these virtues grew. Native America will not win its fight unless it grows more conscious of the danger, more vigilant in defence.

The most striking feature of life in Sheridan is that a feeling of equality is still almost universal, at least among the whites. It is an unforced equality, which is so widely accepted that it does not need to call attention to itself. A delivery-boy will meet the wife of a college professor on the street, and will wave his hand at her and call out, “Hello there, Mrs. Holt, you’re looking just fine today.” The clerk at the grocery store will say, “Good morning, Mrs. Holt. Why, you’ve washed your hair.” And the ice-man will find Mrs. Holt digging in her garden, and will stop to tell her, “Don’t plant your tulips there—it’s too shady. Plant them over by that wall, where they’ll have a chance to grow.”

Social democracy of this sort is of course widespread in rural America. But there are few towns, and fewer suburbs to great cities, where it still is dominant. And in the big cities themselves it is giving way more and more to a nasty caricature of equality: a defensive smartness that has none of the virtues of equality and none of the virtues of a class-system.

Relations between people of different incomes, backgrounds, and education can be made smooth either by the institution of equality or by the institution of social classes. Either will work agreeably; either will promote human dignity. The one thing that will not work agreeably is a mixture of the two, which often occurs in American big cities. When you get into a New York taxicab wearing a top hat your driver may be a friendly soul who assumes that in spite of your clothes you are human. In that case he will give

<sup>1</sup> This is a real town, which I am calling by a made-up name because I am using the town for what is typical in it, not for what is individual.

you a trial, and at the next red light will start on murder, politics, or the strange habits of the taxi-riding public. On the other hand, your driver is quite likely to be a man who not only believes in classes but who believes, reasonably enough, that his own class is unenviable. The sight of your top hat will not soothe him. He will make it clear that he thinks you neither useful nor pretty. For with the exception of the small group of trained domestic servants, the American who is class conscious has become so in order to vent a grievance, commonly a just grievance, against society. He therefore gets no comfort from the American system of equality, and no comfort from the foreign system of classes.

The Englishman, on the other hand, who believes he has a "place," who can define that "place" exactly, and who respects it, does not feel hampered by the class-system; he feels protected. He has been given a form, or fiction, with the help of which he can deal comfortably with people who are very different from himself. Go into a "pub" in an English village and the crowd in the bar-parlor will fall silent. You may think they are silent out of respect for your exalted position. That was what a friend of mine thought (he is professor of history at an American university), and he was indignant at such servility. He should have saved his anger. The English countryman is unimpressed by shiny shoes or city clothes. The silence is curiosity. And so far from finding the stranger an object of awe, the company is judging him. First they want to classify him; then they want to know whether they like him. If they do, and he has enough information to join in their talk, he will find how class distinctions can smooth out social intercourse. And if they don't like him he will find what a clear and splendid difference there is between being granted "superior" social position and being looked up to, or even tolerated.

The English system is just as good a way of securing ease and stability in social relations as is the American system. Each system is a fundamental social institution, affecting the whole life of the community. Each system is a factor in the culture of the country where it has been established. Each system, while working healthily, ensures against class consciousness in the Marxian sense. But neither system, today, is working healthily. The American system, like the English, is living on momentum from the past, and may die with the present generation unless the conditions that bred the system are kept alive.

It is heartening to find Sheridan preserving its social democracy on the doorstep of a giant city where "equality" has no meaning at

all, where a landless, toolless Marxian proletariat faces a Marxian bourgeoisie. There are several reasons why Sheridan has been able to do this. In the first place, it has kept a high standard in its public schools. Practically all the children of the town, therefore, are sent to these schools, so that the boy who grows up to be an ice-man and the girl who grows up to be the wife of a college professor may have sat side by side in class. This is often said to be customary in America; but it has long been quite uncustomary among people who, like many citizens of Sheridan, could afford to send their children to private school.

In the second place, there is no class of very rich people in Sheridan, and hardly any very poor. Though there is a wide range of income, there is no fantastic gulf of the sort that makes "equality" a joke. In the third place, the sense of civic pride among the citizens has been so strong that the town provides a number of amenities for all—not only cultural amenities, but abundant tennis courts, swimming beaches, and the like. These are well kept, with the result that the rich feel no need of having their own tennis courts, their own bathhouses and strips of beach. And not being over-rich they feel no need of advertising their pride. So they all use the communal facilities. In the fourth place there is a university in Sheridan, and the university has a large group of students from Middle Western farms where social democracy is as natural as breathing.

This equality which still lingers in Sheridan, making the half-hour drive from the huge neighboring city seem a bridge between two worlds, is a vital part of American culture. But what of the city, the antithesis to Sheridan? If the giant city grows and flourishes, Sheridan will die. And the city, with its skyscrapers, millionaires, gangsters, and polyglot proletariat—is it not the city typical of America, too? Yes: but it is not typical of American culture. It is my thesis that the city stands for the other America—big, loud, and un-selfconfident as a new boy at school, but not half so native as Sheridan, not half so well rooted, and in the end not half so strong.

Since Sheridan survived 1929, it may never be engulfed. It is still threatened, but its old character is not yet gone. Perhaps Sheridan will turn back and save the institutions which gave it that character, instead of accepting its metropolitan doom. If it does, the moment when the tide turns, the moment when the city stops encroaching on its tiny neighbor, will be an important moment in the story of American culture, and an important moment in world history. In order to show how I can hope for such an event, I must explain

what I mean by the phrase, "American culture." In common speech the phrase has little meaning, or else a meaning that is clear but trivial.

In the advertising columns of the *American Magazine* for November, 1934, there is a sample of the popular use of the word, culture. "At Palm Beach and Nassau, California and Cannes," reads the caption under a picture, "every year they flock by scores—those smart cultured women with enough money to indulge the slightest whim. And the number of them who use Listerine Tooth Paste is amazing."

And in the *Saturday Evening Post* for December 1, 1934, in an article called "An Industrial Design for Living," the following sentences occur: "Our nation has been on the receiving end of a cultural movement the like of which would be hard to imagine. All the colleges, all the magazines, the newspapers and the movies, have been indoctrinating people with the idea of beauty in person, in clothing and in background, until they have developed an appetite for such things beyond ordinary comprehension."

Here we have two of the commonest uses of the word: culture as female wealth and smartness, and culture as a consumer's demand for beauty, a demand that has been whipped up by "all the colleges, all the magazines, the newspapers and the movies." The first use of the word is silly enough to be harmless. People are in no danger of believing that a cultured nation is a nation composed chiefly of beautiful bare young women "with enough money to indulge the slightest whim." But the second use is evil, for it leads to misunderstanding. It is a form of the heresy that culture is a thing which can be stored in libraries and museums. Culture, in this sense, is not a way of life but something you learn at school, like plane geometry, or something you catch, like measles. If you have learned it or caught it, if you have "been on the receiving end of a cultural movement," then you will know about beauty and will want some of it. And if you want beauty you will go to the shops where it is for sale and buy as much as you can afford, or as much as you have room for at home.

This is the industrial-commercial view of culture, as is made clear in the *Saturday Evening Post* article, which continues as follows: "The old-time pioneers who pushed beyond the Alleghanies felt that they had a continent to explore, and, if your mind runs that way, to exploit. But we who come after them, or rather, out of them, have lived into a time when the pioneering has come into something richer than a green continent. It is a fertile region that lies some-

where between the human intelligence and the human soul. Developing it will provide plenty of work for all the machines that can be contrived and all the labor that exists."

The last sentence is perfect. The "pioneers" are done with exploring North America, and they find themselves with quite a lot of redundant machinery on their hands. So they decide to "develop" the "fertile region that lies somewhere between the human intelligence and human soul." By "developing" it they mean making it "beauty-conscious"; they mean teaching it to want goods and gadgets that have "eye-appeal." If you are in the market for goods with "eye-appeal," you have culture. Your "fertile region" has been developed. Of course, as the inventors turn out more and more machines, we shall have to get more and more cultured. In time, even our tooth paste and our telephones will have "eye-appeal." Everything we buy will be beautiful, and we'll buy an astonishing lot (for yesterday's eye-appeal can always be made into today's eyesore). In this way America should become the most cultured nation in the world's history.

This industrial-commercial view of culture, which sees it as the next field for industry "to explore, and, if your mind runs that way, to exploit," flourished during the years when Big Business was glorified. During the 1920's there were people who thought that as soon as Mr. Hoover finished solving the problem of poverty, Americans would apply sound business principles to the Higher Life and would shortly be delivering large packages of beauty and truth to every taxpayer. Today such people, though less hopeful about Mr. Hoover, still think that culture can be "laid on" like gas or water. They believe that if only a group of technocrats, or bureaucrats, or commissars, would organize things so that the whole working population would have mechanical jobs for four hours a day and freedom for twenty, the national demand for Higher Life would be too surprising for words. They may be right, for what they mean by higher life is reading "good books," going to concerts and picture galleries, and listening to lectures. None of these pastimes has any necessary connection with culture. The American public, for example, might spend its time reading Greek and Roman literature, looking at Italian and Dutch paintings, hearing German and Russian music, and attending lectures by visiting playwrights from Vienna and Budapest. The result would probably be a nation of prigs. I see no reason to think it would be a nation with culture. "If I read as many books as that man," said Hobbes, "I'd be as big a fool as he." "Beware of the man who would rather

read than write," warns Bernard Shaw. Beware of the nation whose culture means admiring the creativeness of other people.

The Pittsburgh *Sun-Telegraph* for February 25, 1935, ran the following editorial:

Andrew W. Mellon, former Secretary of the Treasury, spent more than \$4,000,000 to buy six famous paintings, five of them from Soviet Russia. He planned to build a great art museum in Washington to house his famous collection of pictures, worth about \$19,000,000.

One by one he bought at huge prices great works of art from European collections in order to realize his dream of making Washington the art capital of the world.

Mr. Mellon is proof of the utter falsity of the conception, once so widespread abroad, of American millionaires as ruthless money-grubbing materialists.

In no other nation on earth, at no other time in history, have great individual fortunes so generously served the permanent scientific and artistic interests of mankind as here.

This is the perfect expression of false, colonial, imitative culture. The thought that Washington could become "the art capital of the world" by becoming the storehouse for a lot of Italian and Flemish and Byzantine paintings is a thought that does no honor to the human mind. Just as a city is a place where people live, not a place where they are buried, so an art capital is a place where art is produced, not a place where it is put away. . . .

*The Law of the Free, 1937*

# The American Plan

JOHN DOS PASSOS

Frederick Winslow Taylor (they called him Speedy Taylor in the shop) was born in Germantown, Pennsylvania, the year of Buchanan's election. His father was a lawyer, his mother the daughter of a New Bedford whaling captain; she was a great reader of Emerson, belonged to the Unitarian Church and the Browning Society. She was a fervent abolitionist and believed in democratic manners; in her housekeeping she was a martinet and drove the servantgirls from dawn till dark. She laid down the rules of conduct:

selfrespect, selfreliance, selfcontrol  
and a cold long head for figures.

But she wanted her children to appreciate the finer things so she took them abroad for three years on the Continent, showed them cathedrals, grand opera, Roman pediments, the old masters under their brown varnish in their great frames of tarnished gilt.

Later Fred Taylor was impatient of these wasted years, stamped out of the room when people talked about the finer things; he was a testy youngster, fond of practical jokes and a great hand at rigging up contraptions and devices.

At Exeter he was head of his class and captain of the ballteam, the first man to pitch overhand. (When umpires complained that overhand pitching wasn't in the rules of the game, he answered that it got results.)

As a boy he had nightmares, going to bed was horrible for him; he thought they came from sleeping on his back. He made himself a leather harness with wooden pegs that stuck into his flesh when he turned over. When he was grown he slept in a chair or in bed in a sitting position propped up with pillows. All his life he suffered from sleeplessness.

He was a crackerjack tennisplayer. In 1881, with his friend Clark, he won the National Doubles Championship. (He used a spoon-shaped racket of his own design.)

At school he broke down from overwork, his eyes went back on him. The doctor suggested manual labor. So instead of going to Harvard he went into the machinshop of a small pumpmanufactur-

ing concern, owned by a friend of the family's, to learn the trade of patternmaker and machinist. He learned to handle a lathe and to dress and cuss like a workingman.

Fred Taylor never smoked tobacco or drank liquor or used tea or coffee; he couldn't understand why his fellowmechanics wanted to go on sprees and get drunk and raise Cain Saturday nights. He lived at home, when he wasn't reading technical books he'd play parts in amateur theatricals or step up to the piano in the evening and sing a good tenor in *A Warrior Bold* or *A Spanish Cavalier*.

He served his first year's apprenticeship in the machinshop without pay; the next two years he made a dollar and a half a week, the last year two dollars.

Pennsylvania was getting rich off iron and coal. When he was twentytwo, Fred Taylor went to work at the Midvale Iron Works. At first he had to take a clerical job, but he hated that and went to work with a shovel. At last he got them to put him on a lathe. He was a good machinist, he worked ten hours a day and in the evenings followed an engineering course at Stevens. In six years he rose from machinist's helper to keeper of toolcribs to gangboss to foreman to mastermechanic in charge of repairs to chief draftsman and director of research to chief engineer of the Midvale Plant.

The early years he was a machinist with the other machinists in the shop, cussed and joked and worked with the rest of them, soldiered on the job when they did. Mustn't give the boss more than his money's worth. But when he got to be foreman he was on the management's side of the fence, *gathering in on the part of those on the management's side all the great mass of traditional knowledge which in the past has been in the heads of the workmen and in the physical skill and knack of the workman*. He couldn't stand to see an idle lathe or an idle man.

Production went to his head and thrilled his sleepless nerves like liquor or women on a Saturday night. He never loafed and he'd be damned if anybody else would. Production was an itch under his skin.

He lost his friends in the shop; they called him niggerdriver. He was a small man with a short temper and a nasty tongue.

*I was a young man in years but I give you my word I was a great deal older than I am now, what with the worry, meanness and contemptibleness of the whole damn thing. It's horrid life for any man to live not being able to look any workman in the face without*

*seeing hostility there, and a feeling that every man around you is your virtual enemy.*

That was the beginning of the Taylor System of Scientific Management.

He was impatient of explanations, he didn't care whose hide he took off in enforcing the laws he believed inherent in the industrial process.

*When starting an experiment in any field question everything, question the very foundations upon which the art rests, question the simplest, the most self-evident, the most universally accepted facts; prove everything,*

except the dominant Quaker Yankee (the New Bedford skippers were the greatest niggerdrivers on the whaling seas) rules of conduct. He boasted he'd never ask a workman to do anything he couldn't do.

He devised an improved steamhammer; he standardized tools and equipment, he filled the shop with college students with stop-watches and diagrams, tabulating, standardizing. *There's the right way of doing a thing and the wrong way of doing it; the right way means increased production, lower costs, higher wages, bigger profits:* the American Plan.

He broke up the foreman's job into separate functions, speedbosses, gangbosses, timestudy men, orderofwork men.

The skilled mechanics were too stubborn for him, what he wanted was a plain handyman who'd do what he was told. If he was a firstclass man and did firstclass work Taylor was willing to let him have firstclass pay; that's where he began to get into trouble with the owners.

At thirtyfour he married and left Midvale and took a flyer for the big money in connection with a pulpmill started in Maine by some admirals and political friends of Grover Cleveland's;

the panic of '93 made hash of that enterprise,

so Taylor invented for himself the job of Consulting Engineer in Management and began to build up a fortune by careful investments.

The first paper he read before the American Society of Mechanical Engineers was anything but a success, they said he was crazy. *I have found,* he wrote in 1909, *that any improvement is not only opposed but aggressively and bitterly opposed by the majority of men.*

He was called in by Bethlehem Steel. It was in Bethlehem he made his famous experiments with handling pigiron; he taught a Dutchman named Schmidt to handle fortyseven tons instead of twelve and a half tons of pigiron a day and got Schmidt to admit he was as good as ever at the end of the day.

He was a crank about shovels, every job had to have a shovel of the right weight and size for that job alone; every job had to have a man of the right weight and size for that job alone; but when he began to pay his men in proportion to the increased efficiency of their work,

the owners who were a lot of greedy smalleyed Dutchmen began to raise Hail Columbia; when Schwab bought Bethlehem Steel in 1901

Fred Taylor

inventor of efficiency

who had doubled the production of the stamping-mill by speeding up the main lines of shafting from ninety-six to twohundred and twentyfive revolutions a minute

was unceremoniously fired.

After that Fred Taylor always said he couldn't afford to work for money.

He took to playing golf (using golfclubs of his own design), doping out methods for transplanting huge boxtrees into the garden of his home.

At Boxly in Germantown he kept open house for engineers, factorymanagers, industrialists;

he wrote papers,

lectured in colleges,

appeared before a congressional committee,

everywhere preached the virtues of scientific management and the Barth slide rule, the cutting down of waste and idleness, the substitution for skilled mechanics of the plain handyman (like Schmidt the pigiron handler) who'd move as he was told

and work by the piece:

production;

more steel rails more bicycles more spools of thread more armor-plate for battleships more bedpans more barbedwire more needles more lightningrods more ballbearings more dollarbills;

(the old Quaker families of Germantown were growing rich, the Pennsylvania millionaires were breeding billionaires out of iron and coal)

production would make every firstclass American rich who was

willing to work at piecework and not drink or raise Cain or think or stand mooning at his lathe.

Thrifty Schmidt the pigiron handler can invest his money and get to be an owner like Schwab and the rest of the greedy smalleyed Dutchmen and cultivate a taste for Bach and have hundredyearold boxtrees in his garden at Bethlehem or Germantown or Chestnut Hill,

and lay down the rules of conduct;  
the American plan.

But Fred Taylor never saw the working of the American plan; in 1915 he went to the hospital in Philadelphia suffering from a breakdown.

All his life he'd had the habit of winding his watch every afternoon at fourthirty;

on the afternoon of his fiftyninth birthday, when the nurse went into his room to look at him at fourthirty,  
he was dead with his watch in his hand.

*The Big Money, 1936*

# The American Dream

JAMES TRUSLOW ADAMS

Beginning with a guard scarce sufficient to defend the stockade at Jamestown against a few naked Indians, we grew until we were able to select from nearly 25,000,000 men of military age such millions as we would to hurl back at our enemies across the sea, only nine generations later. A continent which scarce sufficed to maintain a half million savages now supports nearly two hundred and fifty times that number of as active and industrious people as there are in the world. The huge and empty land has been filled with homes, roads, railways, schools, colleges, hospitals, and all the comforts of the most advanced material civilization. The mere physical tasks have been stupendous and unparalleled. Supplied at each important stage of advance with new implements of science which hastened our pace, lured by such rewards for haste and industry as were never offered to man before, keyed to activity by a climate that makes expenditure of nervous energy almost a bodily necessity, we threw ourselves into the task of physical domination of our environment with an abandonment that perforce led us to discard much that we had started to build up in our earliest days.

Even so, the frontier was always retreating before us, and sending its influence back among us in reflux waves. . . . In the eighteenth century we had an established civilization, with stability of material and spiritual values. Then we began our scramble for the untold wealth which lay at the foot of the rainbow. As we have gone ever westward, stability gave place to the constant flux in which we have since lived. Recently a distinguished English man of letters complained to me at dinner that we made too much of the frontier as an excuse for everything. It is not an excuse, but it is assuredly an explanation. We let ourselves be too much deflected by it from the building of the civilization of which our forefathers laid the foundations, and the frontier has stretched from our doors until almost yesterday. When my great-grandmother, an old lady with whom I frequently talked as a young man, was born, the United States extended only to the Mississippi, without including even Florida and the Gulf Coast. Both my grandfathers were children when Thomas Jefferson, who carried our bounds to the Rockies, died. When my father was a baby, the entire country south of

Oklahoma and from the Rockies westward was still Spanish territory. When I was born, the Sioux and the Nez Percés were still on the warpath. I was five when the Southwest was first spanned by the Southern Pacific, and twelve when the frontier was officially declared closed.

While thus occupied with material conquest and upbuilding, we did not wholly lose the vision of something nobler. If we hastened after the pot of gold, we also saw the rainbow itself, and felt that it promised, as of old, a hope for mankind. In the realm of thought we have been practical and adaptive rather than original and theoretical, although it may be noted that to-day we stand pre-eminent in astronomy. In medicine we have conferred discoveries of inestimable value on the world, which we have also led along the road of many humanitarian reforms. . . . Until the reaction after the World War, we had struggled for a juster law of nations and for the extension of arbitration as a substitute for war in international disputes. If in arts and letters we have produced no men who may be claimed to rank with the masters of all time, we have produced a body of work without which the world would be poorer and which ranks high by contemporary world standards. In literature and the drama, to-day, there is no work being done better anywhere than in the United States. In the intangible realm of character, there is no other country that can show in the past century or more two men of greater nobility than Washington and Lincoln.

But, after all, many of these things are not new, and if they were all the contribution which America has had to make, she would have meant only a place for more people, a spawning ground for more millions of the human species. In many respects, as I have not hesitated to say elsewhere, there are other lands in which life is easier, more stimulating, more charming than in raw America, for America *is* still raw, and unnecessarily so. The barbarian carelessness of the motoring millions, the littered roadsides, the use of our most beautiful scenery for the advertising of products which should be boycotted for that very reason, are but symptoms of our slipping down from civilized standards of life, as are also our lawlessness and corruption. . . . Some are also European problems as well as American. Some are urban, without regard to international boundaries. The mob mentality of the city crowd everywhere is coming to be one of the menaces to modern civilization. The ideal of democracy and the reality of the crowd are the two sides of the shield of modern government. "I think our govern-

ments will remain virtuous . . . as long as they are chiefly agricultural; and this will be as long as there shall be vacant lands in any part of America. When they get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, they will become corrupt as in Europe," wrote Jefferson in the days of the Bourbons.

If, as I have said, the things already listed were all we have had to contribute, America would have made no distinctive and unique gift to mankind. But there has been also the *American dream*, that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of a social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position. I once had an intelligent young Frenchman as guest in New York, and after a few days I asked him what struck him most among his new impressions. Without hesitation he replied, "The way that everyone of every sort looks you right in the eye, without a thought of inequality." Some time ago a foreigner who used to do some work for me, and who had picked up a very fair education, used occasionally to sit and chat with me in my study after he had finished his work. One day he said that such a relationship was the great difference between America and his homeland. There, he said, "I would do my work and might get a pleasant word, but I could never sit and talk like this. There is a difference there between social grades which cannot be got over. I would not talk to you there as man to man, but as my employer."

No, the American dream that has lured tens of millions of all nations to our shores in the past century has not been a dream of merely material plenty, though that has doubtless counted heavily. It has been much more than that. It has been a dream of being able to grow to fullest development as man and woman, unhampered by the barriers which had slowly been erected in older civilizations, unrepressed by social orders which had developed for the benefit of classes rather than for the simple human being of any and every class. And that dream has been realized more fully in actual life here than anywhere else, though very imperfectly even among ourselves.

It has been a great epic and a great dream. What, now, of the future? . . .

I am not here concerned with the longer economic problems raised by the relations of world distribution and consumption under mass production. The problems, fundamental and of extreme seriousness, have been amply discussed elsewhere and by those more competent. But whether, in the next decade, we shall have again to face a furious economic pace or whether we shall be confronted by a marked slowing down of our economic machine, the chief factor in how we shall meet either situation is that of the American mind. One of the interesting questions with regard to that is whether our long subjection to the frontier and other American influences has produced a new type or merely a transient change. Can we hold to the good and escape from the bad? Are the dream and the idealism of the frontier and the New Land inextricably involved with the ugly scars which have also been left on us by our three centuries of exploitation and conquest of the continent?

We [know] how some of the scars were obtained; how it was that we came to insist upon business and money-making and material improvement as good in themselves; how they took on the aspects of moral virtues; how we came to consider an unthinking optimism essential; how we refused to look on the seamy and sordid realities of any situation in which we found ourselves; how we regarded criticism as obstructive and dangerous for our new communities; how we came to think manners undemocratic and a cultivated mind a hindrance to success, a sign of inefficient effeminacy; how size and statistics of material development came to be more important in our eyes than quality and spiritual values; how in the ever-shifting advance of the frontier we came to lose sight of the past in hopes for the future; how we forgot to *live*, in the struggle to make a living; how our education tended to become utilitarian or aimless; and how other unfortunate traits only too notable to-day were developed.

While we have been absorbed in our tasks, the world has also been changing. We Americans are not alone in having to search for a new scale and basis for values, but for several reasons the task is more essential for us. On the one hand, our transplanatation to the New World and our constant advance over its empty expanse unsettled the old values for us to a far greater extent than in Europe; and, on the other, the mere fact that there were no old things to be swept away here made us feel the full impact of the Industrial Revolution and the effect of machinery, when we turned to in-

dustrial life, to a far greater extent than in Europe, where the revolution originated.

It would seem as though the time had come when this question of values was of prime and pressing importance for us. For long we have been tempted and able to ignore it. Engaged in the work of building cities and developing the continent, values for many tended to be materialized and simplified. When a man staked out a clearing, and saw his wife and children without shelter, there was no need to discuss what were the real values in a humane and satisfying life. The trees had to be chopped, the log hut built, the stumps burned, and the corn planted. Simplification became a habit of mind and was carried into our lives long after the clearing had become a prosperous city. But such a habit of mind does not ignore values. It merely accepts certain ones implicitly, as does our most characteristic philosophy, the Pragmatism of William James. It will not do to say that we shall have no *a priori* standards and that the proof of the value of a thing or idea shall be whether it will "work." What do we mean by its "working"? Must we not mean that it will produce or conduce to some result that strikes us as desirable—that is, something that we have already set up in our minds as something worth while? In other words, a standard or value?

We no longer have the frontier to divert us or to absorb our energies. We shall steadily become a more densely populated country in which our social ideals will have to be such as to give us civilized contentment. To clear the muddle in which our education is at present, we shall obviously have to define our values. Unless we can agree on what the values in life are, we clearly can have no goal in education, and if we have no goal, the discussion of methods is merely futile. Once the frontier stage is passed,—the acquisition of a bare living, and the setting up of a fair economic base,—the American dream itself opens all sorts of questions as to values. It is easy to say a better and richer life for all men, but what *is* better and what *is* richer?

In this respect, as in many others, the great business leaders are likely to lead us astray rather than to guide us. For example, as promulgated by them, there is danger in the present popular theory of the high-wage scale. The danger lies in the fact that the theory is advanced not for the purpose of creating a better type of man by increasing his leisure and the opportunity for making a wise use of it, but for the sole and avowed purpose of increasing his powers as a "consumer." He is, therefore, goaded by every possible method of pressure or cajolery to spend his wages in consuming goods. He

is warned that if he does not consume to the limit, instead of indulging in pleasures which do not cost money, he may be deprived not only of his high wages but of any at all. He, like the rest of us, thus appears to be getting into a treadmill in which he earns, not that he may enjoy, but that he may spend, in order that the owners of the factories may grow richer.

For example, Ford's fortune is often referred to as one of the "honestly" obtained ones. He pretends to despise money, and boasts of the high wages he pays and the cheapness of his cars, yet, either because his wages are still too low or the cars too high, he has accumulated \$1,000,000,000 for himself from his plant. This would seem to be a high price for society to pay even him for his services to it, while the economic lives of some hundreds of thousands of men and women are made dependent on his whim and word.

Just as in education we have got to have some aims based on values before we can reform our system intelligently or learn in what direction to go, so with business and the American dream. Our democracy cannot attempt to curb, guide, or control the great business interests and powers unless we have clear notions as to the purpose in mind when we try to do so. If we are to regard man merely as a producer and consumer, then the more ruthlessly efficient big business is, the better. Many of the goods consumed doubtless make man healthier, happier, and better even on the basis of a high scale of human values. But if we think of him as a human being primarily, and only incidentally as a consumer, then we have to consider what values are best or most satisfying for him as a human being. We can attempt to regulate business for him not as a consumer but as a man, with many needs and desires with which he has nothing to do as a consumer. Our point of view will shift from efficiency and statistics to human nature. We shall not create a high-wage scale in order that the receiver will consume more, but that he may, in one way or another, live more abundantly, whether by enjoying those things which are factory-produced or those which are not. The points of view are entirely different, socially and economically.

In one important respect America has changed fundamentally from the time of the frontier. The old life was lonely and hard, but it bred a strong individualism. The farmer of Jefferson's day was independent and could hold opinions equally so. Steadily we are tending toward becoming a nation of employees—whether a man gets five dollars a day or a hundred thousand a year. The "yes-men" are as new to our national life as to our vocabulary, but they are

real. It is no longer merely the laborer or factory hand who is dependent on the whim of his employer, but men all the way up the economic and social scales. In the ante-bellum South the black slave knew better than to express his views as to the rights of man. Today the appalling growth of uniformity and timorousness of views as to the perfection of the present economic system held by most men "comfortably off" as corporation clerks or officials is not unrelated to the possible loss of a job.

Another problem is acute for us in the present extreme maladjustment of the intellectual worker to the present economic order. Just as the wage earner is told he must adjust his leisure pursuits to the advantage of business in his role of consumer, so there is almost irresistible economic pressure brought to bear on the intellectual worker to adjust his work to the needs of business or mass consumption. If wages are to go indefinitely higher, owing to mass-production possibilities for raising them, then the intellectual worker or artist will have to pay the price in the higher wages he himself pays for all services and in all the items of his expenses, such as rent, in which wages form a substantial element. His own costs thus rising, owing to the rising wage scale, he finds that a limited market for his intellectual wares no longer allows him to exist in a world otherwise founded on mass-production profits. He cannot forever pay rising mass-production costs without deriving for himself some form of mass-production profit. This would not be so bad if mass consumption did not mean for the most part a distinct lowering in the quality of his thought and expression. If the artist or intellectual worker could count on a wide audience instead of a class or group, the effect on his own work would be vastly stimulating, but for that the wide audience must be capable of appreciating work at its highest. The theory of mass production breaks down as yet when applied to the things of the spirit. Merging of companies in huge corporations, and the production of low-priced products for markets of tens of millions of consumers for one standard brand of beans or cars, may be possible in the sphere of our material needs. It cannot be possible, however, in the realm of the mind, yet the whole tendency at present is in that direction. Newspapers are merging as if they were factories, and daily, weekly, and monthly journals are all becoming as dependent on mass sales as a tooth-paste.

The result is to lower the quality of thought as represented in them to that of the least common denominator of the minds of the millions of consumers.

If the American dream is to come true and to abide with us, it will, at bottom, depend on the people themselves. If we are to achieve a richer and fuller life for all, they have got to know what such an achievement implies. In a modern industrial State, an economic base is essential for all. We point with pride to our "national income", but the nation is only an aggregate of individual men and women, and when we turn from the single figure of total income to the incomes of individuals, we find a very marked injustice in its distribution. There is no reason why wealth, which is a social product, should not be more equitably controlled and distributed in the interests of society. But, unless we settle on the values of life, we are likely to attack in a wrong direction and burn the barn to find our penny in the hay.

Above and beyond the mere economic base, the need for a scale of values becomes yet greater. If we are entering on a period in which, not only in industry but in other departments of life, the mass is going to count for more and the individual less, and if each and all are to enjoy a richer and fuller life, the level of the mass has got to rise appreciably above what it is at present. It must either rise to a higher level of communal life or drag that life down to its own, in political leadership, and in the arts and letters. There is no use in accusing America of being a "Babbit Warren." The top and bottom are spiritually and intellectually nearer together in America than in most countries, but there are plenty of Babbitts everywhere. "Main Street" is the longest in the world, for it encircles the globe. It is an American name, but not an American thoroughfare. One can suffocate in an English cathedral town or a French provincial city as well as in Zenith. That is not the point.

The point is that if we are to have a rich and full life in which all are to share and play their parts, if the American dream is to be a reality, our communal spiritual and intellectual life must be distinctly higher than elsewhere, where classes and groups have their separate interests, habits, market, arts, and lives. If the dream is not to prove possible of fulfillment, we might as well become stark realists, become once more class-conscious, and struggle as individuals or classes against one another. If it is to come true, those on top, financially, intellectually, or otherwise, have got to devote themselves to the "Great Society," and those who are below in the scale have got to strive to rise, not merely economically, but culturally. We cannot become a great democracy by giving ourselves up as individuals to selfishness, physical comfort, and cheap amusements. The very foundation of the American dream of a

better and richer life for all is that all, in varying degrees, shall be capable of wanting to share in it. It can never be wrought into a reality by cheap people or by "keeping up with the Joneses." There is nothing whatever in a fortune merely in itself or in a man merely in himself. It all depends on what is made of each. Lincoln was not great because he was born in a log cabin, but because he got out of it—that is, because he rose above the poverty, ignorance, lack of ambition, shiftlessness of character, contentment with mean things and low aims which kept so many thousands in the huts where they were born.

If we are to make the dream come true we must all work together, no longer to build bigger, but to build better. There is a time for quantity and a time for quality. There is a time when quantity may become a menace and the law of diminishing returns begins to operate, but not so with quality. By working together I do not mean another organization, of which the land is as full as was Kansas of grasshoppers. I mean a genuine individual search and striving for the abiding values of life. In a country as big as America it is as impossible to prophesy as it is to generalize, without being tripped up, but it seems to me that there is room for hope as well as mistrust. The epic loses all its glory without the dream. The statistics of size, population, and wealth would mean nothing to me unless I could still believe in the dream.

America is yet "The Land of Contrasts," as it was called in one of the best books written about us, years ago. One day a man from Oklahoma depresses us by yawping about it in such a way as to give the impression that there is nothing in that young State but oil wells and millionaires, and the next day one gets from the University there its excellent quarterly critical list of all the most recent books published in France, Spain, Germany, and Italy, with every indication of the beginning of an active intellectual life and an intelligent play of thought over the ideas of the other side of the world.

There is no better omen of hope than the sane and sober criticism of those tendencies in our civilization which call for rigorous examination. In that respect we are distinctly passing out of the frontier phase. Our life calls for such examination, as does that of every nation to-day, but because we are concerned with the evil symptoms it would be absurd to forget the good. It would be as uncritical to write the history of our past in terms of Morton of Merrymount, Benedict Arnold, "Billy the Kid," Thaddeus Stevens, Jay Gould, P. T. Barnum, Brigham Young, Tom Lawson, and

others who could be gathered together to make an extraordinary jumble of an incomprehensible national story, as it would be to write the past wholly in terms of John Winthrop, Washington, John Quincy Adams, Jefferson, Lincoln, Emerson, Edison, General Gorgas, and others to afford an equally untrue picture.

The nation to-day is no more all made up of Babbitts (though there are enough of them) than it is of young poets. There is a healthy stirring of the deeps, particularly among the younger men and women, who are growing determined that they are not to function solely as consumers for the benefit of business, but intend to lead sane and civilized lives. When one thinks of the prostitution of the moving-picture industry, which might have developed a great art, one can turn from that to the movements everywhere through the country for the small theatre and the creation of folk drama, the collecting of our folk poetry, which was almost unknown to exist a generation ago, and other hopeful signs of an awakening culture deriving straight and naturally from our own soil and past. How far the conflicting good can win against the evil is our problem. It is not a cheering thought to figure the number of people who are thrilled nightly by a close-up kiss on ten thousand screens compared with the number who see a play of O'Neill's. But, on the other hand, we need not forget that a country that produced last year 1,500,000 Fords, which after their short day will in considerable numbers add to the litter along our country lanes as abandoned chassis, could also produce perhaps the finest example of sculpture in the last half century. We can contrast the spirit manifested in the accumulation of the Rockefeller fortune with the spirit now displayed in its distribution.

Like the country roads, our whole national life is yet cluttered up with the disorderly remnants of our frontier experience, and all help should be given to those who are honestly trying to clean up either the one or the other. But the frontier also left us our American dream, which is being wrought out in many hearts and many institutions.

Among the latter I often think that the one which best exemplifies the dream is the greatest library in this land of libraries, the Library of Congress. I take, for the most part, but little interest in the great gifts and Foundations of men who have incomes they cannot possibly spend, and investments that roll like avalanches. They merely return, not seldom unwisely, a part of their wealth to that society without which they could not have made it, and which too often they have plundered in the making. That is chiefly evidence

of maladjustment in our economic system. A system that steadily increases the gulf between the ordinary man and the super-rich, that permits the resources of society to be gathered into personal fortunes that afford their owners millions of income a year, with only the chance that here and there a few may be moved to confer some of their surplus upon the public in ways chosen wholly by themselves, is assuredly a wasteful and unjust system. It is, perhaps, as inimical as anything could be to the American dream. I do not belittle the generosity or public spirit of certain men. It is the system that as yet is at fault. Nor is it likely to be voluntarily altered by those who benefit most by it. No ruling class has ever willingly abdicated. Democracy can never be saved, and would not be worth saving, unless it can save itself.

The Library of Congress, however, has come straight from the heart of democracy, as it has been taken to it, and I here use it as a symbol of what democracy can accomplish on its own behalf. Many have made gifts to it, but it was created by ourselves through Congress, which has steadily and increasingly shown itself generous and understanding toward it. Founded and built by the people, it is for the people. Anyone who has used the great collections of Europe, with their restrictions and red tape and difficulty of access, praises God for American democracy when he enters the stacks of the Library of Congress.

But there is more to the Library of Congress for the American dream than merely the wise appropriation of public money. There is the public itself, in two of its aspects. The Library of Congress could not have become what it is to-day, with all the generous aid of Congress, without such a citizen as Dr. Herbert Putnam at the directing head of it. He and his staff have devoted their lives to making the four million and more of books and pamphlets serve the public to a degree that cannot be approached by any similar great institution in the Old World. Then there is the public that uses these facilities. As one looks down on the general reading room, which alone contains ten thousand volumes which may be read without even the asking, one sees the seats filled with silent readers, old and young, rich and poor, black and white, the executive and the laborer, the general and the private, the noted scholar and the schoolboy, all reading at their own library provided by their own democracy. It has always seemed to me to be a perfect working out in a concrete example of the American dream—the means provided by the accumulated resources of the people themselves, a public intelligent enough to use them, and men of high distinction, them-

selves a part of the great democracy, devoting themselves to the good of the whole, uncloistered.

It seems to me that it can be only in some such way, carried out in all departments of our national life, that the American dream can be wrought into an abiding reality. I have little trust in the wise paternalism of politicians or the infinite wisdom of business leaders. We can look neither to the government nor to the heads of the great corporations to guide us into the paths of a satisfying and humane existence as a great nation unless we, as multitudinous individuals, develop some greatness in our own individual souls. Until countless men and women have decided in their own hearts, through experience and perhaps disillusion, what is a genuinely satisfying life, a "good life" in the old Greek sense, we need look to neither political nor business leaders. Under our political system it is useless, save by the rarest of happy accidents, to expect a politician to rise higher than the source of his power. So long also as we are ourselves content with a mere extension of the material basis of existence, with the multiplying of our material possessions, it is absurd to think that the men who can utilize that public attitude for the gaining of infinite wealth and power for themselves will abandon both to become spiritual leaders of a democracy that despises spiritual things. Just so long as wealth and power are our sole badges of success, so long will ambitious men strive to attain them.

The prospect is discouraging to-day, but not hopeless. As we compare America in 1931 with the America of 1912 it seems as though we had slipped a long way backwards. But that period is short, after all, and the whole world has been going through the fires of Hell. There are not a few signs of promise now in the sky, signs that the peoples themselves are beginning once again to crave something more than is vouchsafed to them in the toils and toys of the mass-production age. They are beginning to realize that, because a man is born with a particular knack for gathering in vast aggregates of money and power for himself, he may not on that account be the wisest leader to follow nor the best fitted to propound a sane philosophy of life. We have a long and arduous road to travel if we are to realize our American dream in the life of our nation, but if we fail, there is nothing left but the old eternal round. The alternative is the failure of self-government, the failure of the common man to rise to full stature, the failure of all that the American dream has held of hope and promise for mankind.

That dream was not the product of a solitary thinker. It evolved

from the hearts and burdened souls of many millions, who have come to us from all nations. If some of them appear to us to have too great faith, we know not yet to what faith may attain, and may hearken to the words on one of them, Mary Antin, a young immigrant girl who came to us from Russia, a child out of "the Middle Ages," as she says, into our twentieth century. Sitting on the steps of the Boston Public Library, where the treasures of the whole of human thought had been opened to her, she wrote, "This is my latest home, and it invites me to a glad new life. The endless ages have indeed throbbled through my blood, but a new rhythm dances in my veins. My spirit is not tied to the monumental past, any more than my feet were bound to my grandfather's house below the hill. The past was only my cradle, and now it cannot hold me, because I am grown too big; just as the little house in Polotzk, once my home, has now become a toy in memory, as I move about at will in the wide spaces of this splendid palace, whose shadow covers acres. No! It is not I that belong to the past, but the past that belongs to me. America is the youngest of the nations, and inherits all that went before in history. And I am the youngest of America's children, and into my hands is given all her priceless heritage, to the last white star espied through the telescope, to the last great thought of the philosopher. Mine is the whole majestic past, and mine is the shining future."

*The Epic of America, 1931*



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