The Essays of Joseph Conrad

Joseph Conrad

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Contents

‘Oswalds’ in Bishopsbourne, near Canterbury, where Conrad moved to in 1918 and remained for the rest of his life

Notes on Life and Letters

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Author's Note

I don't know whether I ought to offer an apology for this collection which has more to do with life than with letters. Its appeal is made to orderly minds. This, to be frank about it, is a process of tidying up, which, from the nature of things, cannot be regarded as premature. The fact is that I wanted to do it myself because of a feeling that had nothing to do with the considerations of worthiness or unworthiness of the small (but unbroken) pieces collected within the covers of this volume. Of course it may be said that I might have taken up a broom and used it without saying anything about it. That, certainly, is one way of tidying up.

But it would have been too much to have expected me to treat all this matter as removable rubbish. All those things had a place in my life. Whether any of them deserve to have been picked up and ranged on the shelf — this shelf — I cannot say, and, frankly, I have not allowed my mind to dwell on the question. I was afraid of thinking myself into a mood that would hurt my feelings; for those pieces of writing, whatever may be the comment on their display, appertain to the character of the man.

And so here they are, dusted, which was but a decent thing to do, but in no way polished, extending from the year '98 to the year '20, a thin array (for such a stretch of time) of really innocent attitudes: Conrad literary, Conrad political, Conrad reminiscent, Conrad controversial. Well, yes! A one-man show — or is it merely the show of one man?

The only thing that will not be found amongst those Figures and Things that have passed away, will be Conrad en pantoufles. It is a constitutional inability. Schlafrock und pantoffeln! Not that! Never! . . . I don't know whether I dare boast like a certain South American general who used to say that no emergency of war or peace had ever found him "with his boots off"; but I may say that whenever the various periodicals mentioned in this book called on me to come out and blow the trumpet of personal opinions or strike the pensive lute that speaks of the past, I always tried to pull on my boots first. I didn't want to do it, God knows! Their Editors, to whom I beg to offer my thanks here, made me perform mainly by kindness but partly by bribery. Well, yes! Bribery? What can you expect? I never pretended to be better than the people in the next street, or even in the same street.

This volume (including these embarrassed introductory remarks) is as near as I shall ever come to dêshabillé in public; and perhaps it will do something to help towards a better vision of the man, if it gives no more than a partial view of a piece of his back, a little dusty (after the process of tidying up), a little bowed, and receding from the world not because of weariness or misanthropy but for other reasons that cannot be helped: because the leaves fall, the water flows, the clock ticks with that horrid pitiless solemnity which you must have observed in the ticking of the hall clock at home. For reasons like that. Yes! It recedes. And this was the chance to afford one more view of it — even to my own eyes.

The section within this volume called Letters explains itself, though I do not pretend to say that it justifies its own existence. It claims nothing in its defence except the right of speech which I believe belongs to everybody outside a Trappist monastery. The part I have ventured, for shortness' sake, to call Life, may perhaps justify itself by the emotional sincerity of the feelings to which the various papers included under that head owe their origin. And as they relate to events of which everyone has a date, they are in the nature of sign-posts pointing out the direction my thoughts were compelled to take at the various cross-roads. If anybody detects any sort of consistency in the choice, this will be only proof positive that wisdom had nothing to do with it. Whether right or wrong, instinct alone is invariable; a fact which only adds a deeper shade to its inherent mystery. The appearance of intellectuality these pieces may present at first sight is merely the result of the arrangement of words. The logic that may be found there is only the logic of the language. But I need not labour the point. There will be plenty of

people sagacious enough to perceive the absence of all wisdom from these pages. But I believe sufficiently in human sympathies to imagine that very few will question their sincerity. Whatever delusions I may have suffered from I have had no delusions as to the nature of the facts commented on here. I may have misjudged their import: but that is the sort of error for which one may expect a certain amount of toleration.

The only paper of this collection which has never been published before is the Note on the Polish Problem. It was written at the request of a friend to be shown privately, and its "Protectorate" idea, sprung from a strong sense of the critical nature of the situation, was shaped by the actual circumstances of the time. The time was about a month before the entrance of Roumania into the war, and though, honestly, I had seen already the shadow of coming events I could not permit my misgivings to enter into and destroy the structure of my plan. I still believe that there was some sense in it. It may certainly be charged with the appearance of lack of faith and it lays itself open to the throwing of many stones; but my object was practical and I had to consider warily the preconceived notions of the people to whom it was implicitly addressed, and also their unjustifiable hopes. They were unjustifiable, but who was to tell them that? I mean who was wise enough and convincing enough to show them the inanity of their mental attitude? The whole atmosphere was poisoned with visions that were not so much false as simply impossible. They were also the result of vague and unconfessed fears, and that made their strength. For myself, with a very definite dread in my heart, I was careful not to allude to their character because I did not want the Note to be thrown away unread. And then I had to remember that the impossible has sometimes the trick of coming to pass to the confusion of minds and often to the crushing of hearts.

Of the other papers I have nothing special to say. They are what they are, and I am by now too hardened a sinner to feel ashamed of insignificant indiscretions. And as to their appearance in this form I claim that indulgence to which all sinners against themselves are entitled.

J. C.

1920

Part 1 — Letters

Books — 1905.

Chapter 1

"I have not read this author's books, and if I have read them I have forgotten what they were about."

These words are reported as having been uttered in our midst not a hundred years ago, publicly, from the seat of justice, by a civic magistrate. The words of our municipal rulers have a solemnity and importance far above the words of other mortals, because our municipal rulers more than any other variety of our governors and masters represent the average wisdom, temperament, sense and virtue of the community. This generalisation, it ought to be promptly said in the interests of eternal justice (and recent friendship), does not apply to the United States of America. There, if one may believe the long and helpless indignations of their daily and weekly Press, the majority of municipal rulers appear to be thieves of a particularly irrepressible sort. But this by the way. My concern is with a statement issuing from the average temperament and the average wisdom of a great and wealthy community, and uttered by a civic magistrate obviously without fear and without reproach.

I confess I am pleased with his temper, which is that of prudence. "I have not read the books," he says, and immediately he adds, "and if I have read them I have forgotten." This is excellent caution. And I like his style: it is unartificial and bears the stamp of manly sincerity. As a reported piece of prose this declaration is easy to read and not difficult to believe. Many books have not been read; still more have been forgotten. As a piece of civic oratory this declaration is strikingly effective. Calculated to fall in with the bent of the popular mind, so familiar with all forms of forgetfulness, it has also the power to stir up a subtle emotion while it starts a train of thought — and what greater force can be expected from human speech? But it is in naturalness that this declaration is perfectly delightful, for there is nothing more natural than for a grave City Father to forget what the books he has read once — long ago — in his giddy youth maybe — were about.

And the books in question are novels, or, at any rate, were written as novels. I proceed thus cautiously (following my illustrious example) because being without fear and desiring to remain as far as possible without reproach, I confess at once that I have not read them.

I have not; and of the million persons or more who are said to have read them, I never met one yet with the talent of lucid exposition sufficiently developed to give me a connected account of what they are about. But they are books, part and parcel of humanity, and as such, in their ever increasing, jostling multitude, they are worthy of regard, admiration, and compassion.

Especially of compassion. It has been said a long time ago that books have their fate. They have, and it is very much like the destiny of man. They share with us the great incertitude of ignominy or glory — of severe justice and senseless persecution — of calumny and misunderstanding — the shame of undeserved success. Of all the inanimate objects, of all men's creations, books are the nearest to us, for they contain our very thought, our ambitions, our indignations, our illusions, our fidelity to truth, and our persistent leaning towards error. But most of all they resemble us in their precarious hold on life. A bridge constructed according to the rules of the art of bridge-building is certain of a long, honourable and useful career. But a book as good in its way as the bridge may perish obscurely on the very day of its birth. The art of their creators is not sufficient to give them more than a moment of life. Of the books born from the restlessness, the inspiration, and the vanity of human minds, those that the Muses would love best lie more than all others under the menace of an early death. Sometimes their defects will save them. Sometimes a book fair to see may — to use a lofty expression — have no individual soul.

Obviously a book of that sort cannot die. It can only crumble into dust. But the best of books drawing sustenance from the sympathy and memory of men have lived on the brink of destruction, for men's memories are short, and their sympathy is, we must admit, a very fluctuating, unprincipled emotion.

No secret of eternal life for our books can be found amongst the formulas of art, any more than for our bodies in a prescribed combination of drugs. This is not because some books are not worthy of enduring life, but because the formulas of art are dependent on things variable, unstable and untrustworthy; on human sympathies, on prejudices, on likes and dislikes, on the sense of virtue and the sense of propriety, on beliefs and theories that, indestructible in themselves, always change their form — often in the lifetime of one fleeting generation.

Chapter 2

Of all books, novels, which the Muses should love, make a serious claim on our compassion. The art of the novelist is simple. At the same time it is the most elusive of all creative arts, the most liable to be obscured by the scruples of its servants and votaries, the one pre-eminently destined to bring trouble to the mind and the heart of the artist. After all, the creation of a world is not a small undertaking except perhaps to the divinely gifted. In truth every novelist must begin by creating for himself a world, great or little, in which he can honestly believe. This world cannot be made otherwise than in his own image: it is fated to remain individual and a little mysterious, and yet it must resemble something already familiar to the experience, the thoughts and the sensations of his readers. At the heart of fiction, even the least worthy of the name, some sort of truth can be found — if only the truth of a childish theatrical ardour in the game of life, as in the novels of Dumas the father. But the fair truth of human delicacy can be found in Mr. Henry James's novels; and the comical, appalling truth of human rapacity let loose amongst the spoils of existence lives in the monstrous world created by Balzac. The pursuit of happiness by means lawful and unlawful, through resignation or revolt, by the clever manipulation of conventions or by solemn hanging on to the skirts of the latest scientific theory, is the only theme that can be legitimately developed by the novelist who is the chronicler of the adventures of mankind amongst the dangers of the kingdom of the earth. And the kingdom of this earth itself, the ground upon which his individualities stand, stumble, or die, must enter into his scheme of faithful record. To encompass all this in one harmonious conception is a great feat; and even to attempt it deliberately with serious intention, not from the senseless prompting of an ignorant heart, is an honourable ambition. For it requires some courage to step in calmly where fools may be eager to rush. As a distinguished and successful French novelist once observed of fiction, "C'est un art trop difficile."

It is natural that the novelist should doubt his ability to cope with his task. He imagines it more gigantic than it is. And yet literary creation being only one of the legitimate forms of human activity has no value but on the condition of not excluding the fullest recognition of all the more distinct forms of action. This condition is sometimes forgotten by the man of letters, who often, especially in his youth, is inclined to lay a claim of exclusive superiority for his own amongst all the other tasks of the human mind. The mass of verse and prose may glimmer here and there with the glow of a divine spark, but in the sum of human effort it has no special importance. There is no justificative formula for its existence any more than for any other artistic achievement. With the rest of them it is destined to be forgotten, without, perhaps, leaving the faintest trace. Where a novelist has an advantage over the workers in other fields of thought is in his privilege of freedom — the freedom of expression and the freedom of confessing his innermost beliefs — which should console him for the hard slavery of the pen.

Chapter 3

Liberty of imagination should be the most precious possession of a novelist. To try voluntarily to discover the fettering dogmas of some romantic, realistic, or naturalistic creed in the free work of its own inspiration, is a trick worthy of human perverseness which, after inventing an absurdity, endeavours to find for it a pedigree of distinguished ancestors. It is a weakness of inferior minds when it is not the cunning device of those who, uncertain of their talent, would seek to add lustre to it by the authority of a school. Such, for instance, are the high priests who have proclaimed Stendhal for a prophet of Naturalism. But Stendhal himself would have accepted no limitation of his freedom. Stendhal's mind was of the first order. His spirit above must be raging with a peculiarly Stendhalesque scorn and indignation. For the truth is that more than one kind of intellectual cowardice hides behind the literary formulas. And Stendhal was pre-eminently courageous. He wrote his two great novels, which so few people have read, in a spirit of fearless liberty.

It must not be supposed that I claim for the artist in fiction the freedom of moral Nihilism. I would require from him many acts of faith of which the first would be the cherishing of an undying hope; and hope, it will not be contested, implies all the piety of effort and renunciation. It is the God-sent form of trust in the magic force and inspiration belonging to the life of this earth. We are inclined to forget that the way of excellence is in the intellectual, as distinguished from emotional, humility. What one feels so hopelessly barren in declared pessimism is just its arrogance. It seems as if the discovery made by many men at various times that there is much evil in the world were a source of proud and unholy joy unto some of the modern writers. That frame of mind is not the proper one in which to approach seriously the art of fiction. It gives an author — goodness only knows why — an elated sense of his own superiority. And there is nothing more dangerous than such an elation to that absolute loyalty towards his feelings and sensations an author should keep hold of in his most exalted moments of creation.

To be hopeful in an artistic sense it is not necessary to think that the world is good. It is enough to believe that there is no impossibility of its being made so. If the flight of imaginative thought may be allowed to rise superior to many moralities current amongst mankind, a novelist who would think himself of a superior essence to other men would miss the first condition of his calling. To have the gift of words is no such great matter. A man furnished with a long-range weapon does not become a hunter or a warrior by the mere possession of a fire-arm; many other qualities of character and temperament are necessary to make him either one or the other. Of him from whose armoury of phrases one in a hundred thousand may perhaps hit the far-distant and elusive mark of art I would ask that in his dealings with mankind he should be capable of giving a tender recognition to their obscure virtues. I would not have him impatient with their small failings and scornful of their errors. I would not have him expect too much gratitude from that humanity whose fate, as illustrated in individuals, it is open to him to depict as ridiculous or terrible. I would wish him to look with a large forgiveness at men's ideas and prejudices, which are by no means the outcome of malevolence, but depend on their education, their social status, even their professions. The good artist should expect no recognition of his toil and no admiration of his genius, because his toil can with difficulty be appraised and his genius cannot possibly mean anything to the illiterate who, even from the dreadful wisdom of their evoked dead, have, so far, culled nothing but inanities and platitudes. I would wish him to enlarge his sympathies by patient and loving observation while he grows in mental power. It is in the impartial practice of life, if anywhere, that the promise of perfection for his art can be found, rather than in the absurd formulas trying to prescribe this or that particular method of technique or conception. Let him mature the strength of his imagination amongst the things of this earth, which it is his business to cherish and know, and refrain from calling down his inspiration ready-made from some heaven of perfections of which he knows nothing. And I would not grudge him the proud illusion that will come sometimes to a writer: the illusion that his achievement has almost equalled the greatness of his dream. For what else could give him the serenity and the force to hug to his breast as a thing delightful and human, the virtue, the rectitude and sagacity of his own

City, declaring with simple eloquence through the mouth of a Conscript Father: “I have not read this author’s books, and if I have read them I have forgotten . . .”

Henry James — an Appreciation — 1905

The critical faculty hesitates before the magnitude of Mr. Henry James's work. His books stand on my shelves in a place whose accessibility proclaims the habit of frequent communion. But not all his books. There is no collected edition to date, such as some of "our masters" have been provided with; no neat rows of volumes in buckram or half calf, putting forth a hasty claim to completeness, and conveying to my mind a hint of finality, of a surrender to fate of that field in which all these victories have been won. Nothing of the sort has been done for Mr. Henry James's victories in England.

In a world such as ours, so painful with all sorts of wonders, one would not exhaust oneself in barren marvelling over mere bindings, had not the fact, or rather the absence of the material fact, prominent in the case of other men whose writing counts, (for good or evil) — had it not been, I say, expressive of a direct truth spiritual and intellectual; an accident of — I suppose — the publishing business acquiring a symbolic meaning from its negative nature. Because, emphatically, in the body of Mr. Henry James's work there is no suggestion of finality, nowhere a hint of surrender, or even of probability of surrender, to his own victorious achievement in that field where he is a master. Happily, he will never be able to claim completeness; and, were he to confess to it in a moment of self-ignorance, he would not be believed by the very minds for whom such a confession naturally would be meant. It is impossible to think of Mr. Henry James becoming "complete" otherwise than by the brutality of our common fate whose finality is meaningless — in the sense of its logic being of a material order, the logic of a falling stone.

I do not know into what brand of ink Mr. Henry James dips his pen; indeed, I heard that of late he had been dictating; but I know that his mind is steeped in the waters flowing from the fountain of intellectual youth. The thing — a privilege — a miracle — what you will — is not quite hidden from the meanest of us who run as we read. To those who have the grace to stay their feet it is manifest. After some twenty years of attentive acquaintance with Mr. Henry James's work, it grows into absolute conviction which, all personal feeling apart, brings a sense of happiness into one's artistic existence. If gratitude, as someone defined it, is a lively sense of favours to come, it becomes very easy to be grateful to the author of The Ambassadors — to name the latest of his works. The favours are sure to come; the spring of that benevolence will never run dry. The stream of inspiration flows brimful in a predetermined direction, unaffected by the periods of drought, untroubled in its clearness by the storms of the land of letters, without languor or violence in its force, never running back upon itself, opening new visions at every turn of its course through that richly inhabited country its fertility has created for our delectation, for our judgment, for our exploring. It is, in fact, a magic spring.

With this phrase the metaphor of the perennial spring, of the inextinguishable youth, of running waters, as applied to Mr. Henry James's inspiration, may be dropped. In its volume and force the body of his work may be compared rather to a majestic river. All creative art is magic, is evocation of the unseen in forms persuasive, enlightening, familiar and surprising, for the edification of mankind, pinned down by the conditions of its existence to the earnest consideration of the most insignificant tides of reality.

Action in its essence, the creative art of a writer of fiction may be compared to rescue work carried out in darkness against cross gusts of wind swaying the action of a great multitude. It is rescue work, this snatching of vanishing phases of turbulence, disguised in fair words, out of the native obscurity into a light where the struggling forms may be seen, seized upon, endowed with the only possible form of permanence in this world of relative values — the permanence of memory. And the multitude feels it obscurely too; since the demand of the individual to the artist is, in effect, the cry, "Take me out of myself!" meaning really, out of my perishable activity into the light of imperishable consciousness. But

everything is relative, and the light of consciousness is only enduring, merely the most enduring of the things of this earth, imperishable only as against the short-lived work of our industrious hands.

When the last aqueduct shall have crumbled to pieces, the last airship fallen to the ground, the last blade of grass have died upon a dying earth, man, indomitable by his training in resistance to misery and pain, shall set this undiminished light of his eyes against the feeble glow of the sun. The artistic faculty, of which each of us has a minute grain, may find its voice in some individual of that last group, gifted with a power of expression and courageous enough to interpret the ultimate experience of mankind in terms of his temperament, in terms of art. I do not mean to say that he would attempt to beguile the last moments of humanity by an ingenious tale. It would be too much to expect — from humanity. I doubt the heroism of the hearers. As to the heroism of the artist, no doubt is necessary. There would be on his part no heroism. The artist in his calling of interpreter creates (the clearest form of demonstration) because he must. He is so much of a voice that, for him, silence is like death; and the postulate was, that there is a group alive, clustered on his threshold to watch the last flicker of light on a black sky, to hear the last word uttered in the stilled workshop of the earth. It is safe to affirm that, if anybody, it will be the imaginative man who would be moved to speak on the eve of that day without to-morrow — whether in austere exhortation or in a phrase of sardonic comment, who can guess?

For my own part, from a short and cursory acquaintance with my kind, I am inclined to think that the last utterance will formulate, strange as it may appear, some hope now to us utterly inconceivable. For mankind is delightful in its pride, its assurance, and its indomitable tenacity. It will sleep on the battlefield among its own dead, in the manner of an army having won a barren victory. It will not know when it is beaten. And perhaps it is right in that quality. The victories are not, perhaps, so barren as it may appear from a purely strategical, utilitarian point of view. Mr. Henry James seems to hold that belief. Nobody has rendered better, perhaps, the tenacity of temper, or known how to drape the robe of spiritual honour about the drooping form of a victor in a barren strife. And the honour is always well won; for the struggles Mr. Henry James chronicles with such subtle and direct insight are, though only personal contests, desperate in their silence, none the less heroic (in the modern sense) for the absence of shouted watchwords, clash of arms and sound of trumpets. Those are adventures in which only choice souls are ever involved. And Mr. Henry James records them with a fearless and insistent fidelity to the péripéties of the contest, and the feelings of the combatants.

The fiercest excitements of a romance de cape et d'épée, the romance of yard-arm and boarding pike so dear to youth, whose knowledge of action (as of other things) is imperfect and limited, are matched, for the quickening of our maturer years, by the tasks set, by the difficulties presented, to the sense of truth, of necessity — before all, of conduct — of Mr. Henry James's men and women. His mankind is delightful. It is delightful in its tenacity; it refuses to own itself beaten; it will sleep on the battlefield. These warlike images come by themselves under the pen; since from the duality of man's nature and the competition of individuals, the life-history of the earth must in the last instance be a history of a really very relentless warfare. Neither his fellows, nor his gods, nor his passions will leave a man alone. In virtue of these allies and enemies, he holds his precarious dominion, he possesses his fleeting significance; and it is this relation in all its manifestations, great and little, superficial or profound, and this relation alone, that is commented upon, interpreted, demonstrated by the art of the novelist in the only possible way in which the task can be performed: by the independent creation of circumstance and character, achieved against all the difficulties of expression, in an imaginative effort finding its inspiration from the reality of forms and sensations. That a sacrifice must be made, that something has to be given up, is the truth engraved in the innermost recesses of the fair temple built for our edification by the masters of fiction. There is no other secret behind the curtain. All adventure, all love, every success is resumed in the supreme energy of an act of renunciation. It is the uttermost limit of our power; it is the most potent and effective force at our disposal on which rest the labours of a solitary man in his study, the rock on which have been built commonwealths whose might casts a dwarfing shadow upon two oceans. Like a natural force which is obscured as much as illuminated by the multiplicity of phenomena, the power of renunciation is obscured by the mass of weaknesses, vacillations, secondary motives and false

steps and compromises which make up the sum of our activity. But no man or woman worthy of the name can pretend to anything more, to anything greater. And Mr. Henry James's men and women are worthy of the name, within the limits his art, so clear, so sure of itself, has drawn round their activities. He would be the last to claim for them Titanic proportions. The earth itself has grown smaller in the course of ages. But in every sphere of human perplexities and emotions, there are more greatnesses than one — not counting here the greatness of the artist himself. Wherever he stands, at the beginning or the end of things, a man has to sacrifice his gods to his passions, or his passions to his gods. That is the problem, great enough, in all truth, if approached in the spirit of sincerity and knowledge.

In one of his critical studies, published some fifteen years ago, Mr. Henry James claims for the novelist the standing of the historian as the only adequate one, as for himself and before his audience. I think that the claim cannot be contested, and that the position is unassailable. Fiction is history, human history, or it is nothing. But it is also more than that; it stands on firmer ground, being based on the reality of forms and the observation of social phenomena, whereas history is based on documents, and the reading of print and handwriting — on second-hand impression. Thus fiction is nearer truth. But let that pass. A historian may be an artist too, and a novelist is a historian, the preserver, the keeper, the expounder, of human experience. As is meet for a man of his descent and tradition, Mr. Henry James is the historian of fine consciences.

Of course, this is a general statement; but I don't think its truth will be, or can be questioned. Its fault is that it leaves so much out; and, besides, Mr. Henry James is much too considerable to be put into the nutshell of a phrase. The fact remains that he has made his choice, and that his choice is justified up to the hilt by the success of his art. He has taken for himself the greater part. The range of a fine conscience covers more good and evil than the range of conscience which may be called, roughly, not fine; a conscience, less troubled by the nice discrimination of shades of conduct. A fine conscience is more concerned with essentials; its triumphs are more perfect, if less profitable, in a worldly sense. There is, in short, more truth in its working for a historian to detect and to show. It is a thing of infinite complication and suggestion. None of these escapes the art of Mr. Henry James. He has mastered the country, his domain, not wild indeed, but full of romantic glimpses, of deep shadows and sunny places. There are no secrets left within his range. He has disclosed them as they should be disclosed — that is, beautifully. And, indeed, ugliness has but little place in this world of his creation. Yet, it is always felt in the truthfulness of his art; it is there, it surrounds the scene, it presses close upon it. It is made visible, tangible, in the struggles, in the contacts of the fine consciences, in their perplexities, in the sophism of their mistakes. For a fine conscience is naturally a virtuous one. What is natural about it is just its fineness, an abiding sense of the intangible, ever-present, right. It is most visible in their ultimate triumph, in their emergence from miracle, through an energetic act of renunciation. Energetic, not violent: the distinction is wide, enormous, like that between substance and shadow.

Through it all Mr. Henry James keeps a firm hold of the substance, of what is worth having, of what is worth holding. The contrary opinion has been, if not absolutely affirmed, then at least implied, with some frequency. To most of us, living willingly in a sort of intellectual moonlight, in the faintly reflected light of truth, the shadows so firmly renounced by Mr. Henry James's men and women, stand out endowed with extraordinary value, with a value so extraordinary that their rejection offends, by its uncalled-for scrupulousness, those business-like instincts which a careful Providence has implanted in our breasts. And, apart from that just cause of discontent, it is obvious that a solution by rejection must always present a certain lack of finality, especially startling when contrasted with the usual methods of solution by rewards and punishments, by crowned love, by fortune, by a broken leg or a sudden death. Why the reading public which, as a body, has never laid upon a story-teller the command to be an artist, should demand from him this sham of Divine Omnipotence, is utterly incomprehensible. But so it is; and these solutions are legitimate inasmuch as they satisfy the desire for finality, for which our hearts yearn with a longing greater than the longing for the loaves and fishes of this earth. Perhaps the only true desire of mankind, coming thus to light in its hours of leisure, is to be set at rest. One is never set at rest by Mr. Henry James's novels. His books end as an episode in life ends. You remain with the

sense of the life still going on; and even the subtle presence of the dead is felt in that silence that comes upon the artist-creation when the last word has been read. It is eminently satisfying, but it is not final. Mr. Henry James, great artist and faithful historian, never attempts the impossible.

Alphonse Daudet — 1898

It is sweet to talk decorously of the dead who are part of our past, our indisputable possession. One must admit regretfully that to-day is but a scramble, that to-morrow may never come; it is only the precious yesterday that cannot be taken away from us. A gift from the dead, great and little, it makes life supportable, it almost makes one believe in a benevolent scheme of creation. And some kind of belief is very necessary. But the real knowledge of matters infinitely more profound than any conceivable scheme of creation is with the dead alone. That is why our talk about them should be as decorous as their silence. Their generosity and their discretion deserve nothing less at our hands; and they, who belong already to the unchangeable, would probably disdain to claim more than this from a mankind that changes its loves and its hates about every twenty-five years — at the coming of every new and wiser generation.

One of the most generous of the dead is Daudet, who, with a prodigality approaching magnificence, gave himself up to us without reserve in his work, with all his qualities and all his faults. Neither his qualities nor his faults were great, though they were by no means imperceptible. It is only his generosity that is out of the common. What strikes one most in his work is the disinterestedness of the toiler. With more talent than many bigger men, he did not preach about himself, he did not attempt to persuade mankind into a belief of his own greatness. He never posed as a scientist or as a seer, not even as a prophet; and he neglected his interests to the point of never propounding a theory for the purpose of giving a tremendous significance to his art, alone of all things, in a world that, by some strange oversight, has not been supplied with an obvious meaning. Neither did he affect a passive attitude before the spectacle of life, an attitude which in gods — and in a rare mortal here and there — may appear godlike, but assumed by some men, causes one, very unwillingly, to think of the melancholy quietude of an ape. He was not the wearisome expounder of this or that theory, here to-day and spurned to-morrow. He was not a great artist, he was not an artist at all, if you like — but he was Alphonse Daudet, a man as naively clear, honest, and vibrating as the sunshine of his native land; that regrettably undiscriminating sunshine which matures grapes and pumpkins alike, and cannot, of course, obtain the commendation of the very select who look at life from under a parasol.

Naturally, being a man from the South, he had a rather outspoken belief in himself, but his small distinction, worth many a greater, was in not being in bondage to some vanishing creed. He was a worker who could not compel the admiration of the few, but who deserved the affection of the many; and he may be spoken of with tenderness and regret, for he is not immortal — he is only dead. During his life the simple man whose business it ought to have been to climb, in the name of Art, some elevation or other, was content to remain below, on the plain, amongst his creations, and take an eager part in those disasters, weaknesses, and joys which are tragic enough in their droll way, but are by no means so momentous and profound as some writers — probably for the sake of Art — would like to make us believe. There is, when one thinks of it, a considerable want of candour in the august view of life. Without doubt a cautious reticence on the subject, or even a delicately false suggestion thrown out in that direction is, in a way, praiseworthy, since it helps to uphold the dignity of man — a matter of great importance, as anyone can see; still one cannot help feeling that a certain amount of sincerity would not be wholly blamable. To state, then, with studied moderation a belief that in unfortunate moments of lucidity is irresistibly borne in upon most of us — the blind agitation caused mostly by hunger and complicated by love and ferocity does not deserve either by its beauty, or its morality, or its possible results, the artistic fuss made over it. It may be consoling — for human folly is very bizarre — but

it is scarcely honest to shout at those who struggle drowning in an insignificant pool: You are indeed admirable and great to be the victims of such a profound, of such a terrible ocean!

And Daudet was honest; perhaps because he knew no better — but he was very honest. If he saw only the surface of things it is for the reason that most things have nothing but a surface. He did not pretend — perhaps because he did not know how — he did not pretend to see any depths in a life that is only a film of unsteady appearances stretched over regions deep indeed, but which have nothing to do with the half-truths, half-thoughts, and whole illusions of existence. The road to these distant regions does not lie through the domain of Art or the domain of Science where well-known voices quarrel noisily in a misty emptiness; it is a path of toilsome silence upon which travel men simple and unknown, with closed lips, or, maybe, whispering their pain softly — only to themselves.

But Daudet did not whisper; he spoke loudly, with animation, with a clear felicity of tone — as a bird sings. He saw life around him with extreme clearness, and he felt it as it is — thinner than air and more elusive than a flash of lightning. He hastened to offer it his compassion, his indignation, his wonder, his sympathy, without giving a moment of thought to the momentous issues that are supposed to lurk in the logic of such sentiments. He tolerated the little foibles, the small ruffianisms, the grave mistakes; the only thing he distinctly would not forgive was hardness of heart. This unpractical attitude would have been fatal to a better man, but his readers have forgiven him. Withal he is chivalrous to exiled queens and deformed sempstresses, he is pityingly tender to broken-down actors, to ruined gentlemen, to stupid Academicians; he is glad of the joys of the commonplace people in a commonplace way — and he never makes a secret of all this. No, the man was not an artist. What if his creations are illumined by the sunshine of his temperament so vividly that they stand before us infinitely more real than the dingy illusions surrounding our everyday existence? The misguided man is for ever pottering amongst them, lifting up his voice, dotting his i's in the wrong places. He takes Tartarin by the arm, he does not conceal his interest in the Nabob's cheques, his sympathy for an honest Academician plus bête que nature, his hate for an architect plus mauvais que la gale; he is in the thick of it all. He feels with the Duc de Mora and with Felicia Ruys — and he lets you see it. He does not sit on a pedestal in the hieratic and imbecile pose of some cheap god whose greatness consists in being too stupid to care. He cares immensely for his Nabobs, his kings, his book-keepers, his Colettes, and his Saphos. He vibrates together with his universe, and with lamentable simplicity follows M. de Montpavon on that last walk along the Boulevards.

"Monsieur de Montpavon marche à la mort," and the creator of that unlucky gentilhomme follows with stealthy footsteps, with wide eyes, with an impressively pointing finger. And who wouldn't look? But it is hard; it is sometimes very hard to forgive him the dotted i's, the pointing finger, this making plain of obvious mysteries. "Monsieur de Montpavon marche à la mort," and presently, on the crowded pavement, takes off his hat with punctilious courtesy to the doctor's wife, who, elegant and unhappy, is bound on the same pilgrimage. This is too much! We feel we cannot forgive him such meetings, the constant whisper of his presence. We feel we cannot, till suddenly the very naïveté of it all touches us with the revealed suggestion of a truth. Then we see that the man is not false; all this is done in transparent good faith. The man is not melodramatic; he is only picturesque. He may not be an artist, but he comes as near the truth as some of the greatest. His creations are seen; you can look into their very eyes, and these are as thoughtless as the eyes of any wise generation that has in its hands the fame of writers. Yes, they are seen, and the man who is not an artist is seen also commiserating, indignant, joyous, human and alive in their very midst. Inevitably they marchent à la mort — and they are very near the truth of our common destiny: their fate is poignant, it is intensely interesting, and of not the slightest consequence.

GUY DE MAUPASSANT — 1904 {1}

To introduce Maupassant to English readers with apologetic explanations as though his art were recondite and the tendency of his work immoral would be a gratuitous impertinence.

Maupassant's conception of his art is such as one would expect from a practical and resolute mind; but in the consummate simplicity of his technique it ceases to be perceptible. This is one of its greatest qualities, and like all the great virtues it is based primarily on self-denial.

To pronounce a judgment upon the general tendency of an author is a difficult task. One could not depend upon reason alone, nor yet trust solely to one's emotions. Used together, they would in many cases traverse each other, because emotions have their own unanswerable logic. Our capacity for emotion is limited, and the field of our intelligence is restricted. Responsiveness to every feeling, combined with the penetration of every intellectual subterfuge, would end, not in judgment, but in universal absolution. Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner. And in this benevolent neutrality towards the warring errors of human nature all light would go out from art and from life.

We are at liberty then to quarrel with Maupassant's attitude towards our world in which, like the rest of us, he has that share which his senses are able to give him. But we need not quarrel with him violently. If our feelings (which are tender) happen to be hurt because his talent is not exercised for the praise and consolation of mankind, our intelligence (which is great) should let us see that he is a very splendid sinner, like all those who in this valley of compromises err by over-devotion to the truth that is in them. His determinism, barren of praise, blame and consolation, has all the merit of his conscientious art. The worth of every conviction consists precisely in the steadfastness with which it is held.

Except for his philosophy, which in the case of so consummate an artist does not matter (unless to the solemn and naive mind), Maupassant of all writers of fiction demands least forgiveness from his readers. He does not require forgiveness because he is never dull.

The interest of a reader in a work of imagination is either ethical or that of simple curiosity. Both are perfectly legitimate, since there is both a moral and an excitement to be found in a faithful rendering of life. And in Maupassant's work there is the interest of curiosity and the moral of a point of view consistently preserved and never obtruded for the end of personal gratification. The spectacle of this immense talent served by exceptional faculties and triumphing over the most thankless subjects by an unswerving singleness of purpose is in itself an admirable lesson in the power of artistic honesty, one may say of artistic virtue. The inherent greatness of the man consists in this, that he will let none of the fascinations that beset a writer working in loneliness turn him away from the straight path, from the vouchsafed vision of excellence. He will not be led into perdition by the seductions of sentiment, of eloquence, of humour, of pathos; of all that splendid pageant of faults that pass between the writer and his probity on the blank sheet of paper, like the glittering cortège of deadly sins before the austere anchorite in the desert air of Thebaïde. This is not to say that Maupassant's austerity has never faltered; but the fact remains that no tempting demon has ever succeeded in hurling him down from his high, if narrow, pedestal.

It is the austerity of his talent, of course, that is in question. Let the discriminating reader, who at times may well spare a moment or two to the consideration and enjoyment of artistic excellence, be asked to reflect a little upon the texture of two stories included in this volume: "A Piece of String," and "A Sale." How many openings the last offers for the gratuitous display of the author's wit or clever buffoonery, the first for an unmeasured display of sentiment! And both sentiment and buffoonery could have been made very good too, in a way accessible to the meanest intelligence, at the cost of truth and honesty. Here it is where Maupassant's austerity comes in. He refrains from setting his cleverness against the eloquence of the facts. There is humour and pathos in these stories; but such is the greatness of his talent, the refinement of his artistic conscience, that all his high qualities appear inherent in the very things of which he speaks, as if they had been altogether independent of his presentation. Facts, and again facts are his unique concern. That is why he is not always properly understood. His facts are so perfectly rendered that, like the actualities of life itself, they demand from the reader the faculty of observation which is rare, the power of appreciation which is generally wanting in most of us who are guided mainly by empty phrases requiring no effort, demanding from us no qualities except a vague susceptibility to emotion. Nobody has ever gained the vast applause of a crowd by the simple and clear exposition of vital facts. Words alone strung upon a convention have fascinated us as worthless glass

beads strung on a thread have charmed at all times our brothers the unsophisticated savages of the islands. Now, Maupassant, of whom it has been said that he is the master of the mot juste, has never been a dealer in words. His wares have been, not glass beads, but polished gems; not the most rare and precious, perhaps, but of the very first water of their kind.

That he took trouble with his gems, taking them up in the rough and polishing each facet patiently, the publication of the two posthumous volumes of short stories proves abundantly. I think it proves also the assertion made here that he was by no means a dealer in words. On looking at the first feeble drafts from which so many perfect stories have been fashioned, one discovers that what has been matured, improved, brought to perfection by unwearied endeavour is not the diction of the tale, but the vision of its true shape and detail. Those first attempts are not faltering or uncertain in expression. It is the conception which is at fault. The subjects have not yet been adequately seen. His proceeding was not to group expressive words, that mean nothing, around misty and mysterious shapes dear to muddled intellects and belonging neither to earth nor to heaven. His vision by a more scrupulous, prolonged and devoted attention to the aspects of the visible world discovered at last the right words as if miraculously impressed for him upon the face of things and events. This was the particular shape taken by his inspiration; it came to him directly, honestly in the light of his day, not on the tortuous, dark roads of meditation. His realities came to him from a genuine source, from this universe of vain appearances wherein we men have found everything to make us proud, sorry, exalted, and humble.

Maupassant's renown is universal, but his popularity is restricted. It is not difficult to perceive why. Maupassant is an intensely national writer. He is so intensely national in his logic, in his clearness, in his æsthetic and moral conceptions, that he has been accepted by his countrymen without having had to pay the tribute of flattery either to the nation as a whole, or to any class, sphere or division of the nation. The truth of his art tells with an irresistible force; and he stands excused from the duty of patriotic posturing. He is a Frenchman of Frenchmen beyond question or cavil, and with that he is simple enough to be universally comprehensible. What is wanting to his universal success is the mediocrity of an obvious and appealing tenderness. He neglects to qualify his truth with the drop of facile sweetness; he forgets to strew paper roses over the tombs. The disregard of these common decencies lays him open to the charges of cruelty, cynicism, hardness. And yet it can be safely affirmed that this man wrote from the fulness of a compassionate heart. He is merciless and yet gentle with his mankind; he does not rail at their prudent fears and their small artifices; he does not despise their labours. It seems to me that he looks with an eye of profound pity upon their troubles, deceptions and misery. But he looks at them all. He sees — and does not turn away his head. As a matter of fact he is courageous.

Courage and justice are not popular virtues. The practice of strict justice is shocking to the multitude who always (perhaps from an obscure sense of guilt) attach to it the meaning of mercy. In the majority of us, who want to be left alone with our illusions, courage inspires a vague alarm. This is what is felt about Maupassant. His qualities, to use the charming and popular phrase, are not lovable. Courage being a force will not masquerade in the robes of affected delicacy and restraint. But if his courage is not of a chivalrous stamp, it cannot be denied that it is never brutal for the sake of effect. The writer of these few reflections, inspired by a long and intimate acquaintance with the work of the man, has been struck by the appreciation of Maupassant manifested by many women gifted with tenderness and intelligence. Their more delicate and audacious souls are good judges of courage. Their finer penetration has discovered his genuine masculinity without display, his virility without a pose. They have discerned in his faithful dealings with the world that enterprising and fearless temperament, poor in ideas but rich in power, which appeals most to the feminine mind.

It cannot be denied that he thinks very little. In him extreme energy of perception achieves great results, as in men of action the energy of force and desire. His view of intellectual problems is perhaps more simple than their nature warrants; still a man who has written Yvette cannot be accused of want of subtlety. But one cannot insist enough upon this, that his subtlety, his humour, his grimness, though no doubt they are his own, are never presented otherwise but as belonging to our life, as found in nature, whose beauties and cruelties alike breathe the spirit of serene unconsciousness.

Maupassant's philosophy of life is more temperamental than rational. He expects nothing from gods or men. He trusts his senses for information and his instinct for deductions. It may seem that he has made but little use of his mind. But let me be clearly understood. His sensibility is really very great; and it is impossible to be sensible, unless one thinks vividly, unless one thinks correctly, starting from intelligible premises to an unsophisticated conclusion.

This is literary honesty. It may be remarked that it does not differ very greatly from the ideal honesty of the respectable majority, from the honesty of law-givers, of warriors, of kings, of bricklayers, of all those who express their fundamental sentiment in the ordinary course of their activities, by the work of their hands.

The work of Maupassant's hands is honest. He thinks sufficiently to concrete his fearless conclusions in illuminative instances. He renders them with that exact knowledge of the means and that absolute devotion to the aim of creating a true effect — which is art. He is the most accomplished of narrators.

It is evident that Maupassant looked upon his mankind in another spirit than those writers who make haste to submerge the difficulties of our holding-place in the universe under a flood of false and sentimental assumptions. Maupassant was a true and dutiful lover of our earth. He says himself in one of his descriptive passages: "Nous autres que séduit la terre . . ." It was true. The earth had for him a compelling charm. He looks upon her august and furrowed face with the fierce insight of real passion. His is the power of detecting the one immutable quality that matters in the changing aspects of nature and under the ever-shifting surface of life. To say that he could not embrace in his glance all its magnificence and all its misery is only to say that he was human. He lays claim to nothing that his matchless vision has not made his own. This creative artist has the true imagination; he never condescends to invent anything; he sets up no empty pretences. And he stoops to no littleness in his art — least of all to the miserable vanity of a catching phrase.

Anatole France — 1904

Chapter 1 — ”crainquebille”

The latest volume of M. Anatole France purports, by the declaration of its title-page, to contain several profitable narratives. The story of Crainquebille's encounter with human justice stands at the head of them; a tale of a well-bestowed charity closes the book with the touch of playful irony characteristic of the writer on whom the most distinguished amongst his literary countrymen have conferred the rank of Prince of Prose.

Never has a dignity been better borne. M. Anatole France is a good prince. He knows nothing of tyranny but much of compassion. The detachment of his mind from common errors and current superstitions befits the exalted rank he holds in the Commonwealth of Literature. It is just to suppose that the clamour of the tribes in the forum had little to do with his elevation. Their elect are of another stamp. They are such as their need of precipitate action requires. He is the Elect of the Senate — the Senate of Letters — whose Conscript Fathers have recognised him as primus inter pares; a post of pure honour and of no privilege.

It is a good choice. First, because it is just, and next, because it is safe. The dignity will suffer no diminution in M. Anatole France's hands. He is worthy of a great tradition, learned in the lessons of the past, concerned with the present, and as earnest as to the future as a good prince should be in his public action. It is a Republican dignity. And M. Anatole France, with his sceptical insight into an forms of government, is a good Republican. He is indulgent to the weaknesses of the people, and perceives that political institutions, whether contrived by the wisdom of the few or the ignorance of the many, are incapable of securing the happiness of mankind. He perceives this truth in the serenity of his soul and in the elevation of his mind. He expresses his convictions with measure, restraint and harmony, which are indeed princely qualities. He is a great analyst of illusions. He searches and probes their innermost recesses as if they were realities made of an eternal substance. And therein consists his humanity; this is the expression of his profound and unalterable compassion. He will flatter no tribe no section in the forum or in the market-place. His lucid thought is not beguiled into false pity or into the common weakness of affection. He feels that men born in ignorance as in the house of an enemy, and condemned to struggle with error and passions through endless centuries, should be spared the supreme cruelty of a hope for ever deferred. He knows that our best hopes are irrealisable; that it is the almost incredible misfortune of mankind, but also its highest privilege, to aspire towards the impossible; that men have never failed to defeat their highest aims by the very strength of their humanity which can conceive the most gigantic tasks but leaves them disarmed before their irremediable littleness. He knows this well because he is an artist and a master; but he knows, too, that only in the continuity of effort there is a refuge from despair for minds less clear-seeing and philosophic than his own. Therefore he wishes us to believe and to hope, preserving in our activity the consoling illusion of power and intelligent purpose. He is a good and politic prince.

“The majesty of justice is contained entire in each sentence pronounced by the judge in the name of the sovereign people. Jérome Crainquebille, hawker of vegetables, became aware of the august aspect of the law as he stood indicted before the tribunal of the higher Police Court on a charge of insulting a constable of the force.” With this exposition begins the first tale of M. Anatole France's latest volume.

The bust of the Republic and the image of the Crucified Christ appear side by side above the bench occupied by the President Bourriche and his two Assessors; all the laws divine and human are suspended over the head of Crainquebille.

From the first visual impression of the accused and of the court the author passes by a characteristic and natural turn to the historical and moral significance of those two emblems of State and Religion whose accord is only possible to the confused reasoning of an average man. But the reasoning of M. Anatole France is never confused. His reasoning is clear and informed by a profound erudition. Such is not the case of Crainquebille, a street hawker, charged with insulting the constituted power of society in the person of a policeman. The charge is not true, nothing was further from his thoughts; but, amazed by the novelty of his position, he does not reflect that the Cross on the wall perpetuates the memory of a sentence which for nineteen hundred years all the Christian peoples have looked upon as a grave miscarriage of justice. He might well have challenged the President to pronounce any sort of sentence, if it were merely to forty-eight hours of simple imprisonment, in the name of the Crucified Redeemer.

He might have done so. But Crainquebille, who has lived pushing every day for half a century his hand-barrow loaded with vegetables through the streets of Paris, has not a philosophic mind. Truth to say he has nothing. He is one of the disinherited. Properly speaking, he has no existence at all, or, to be strictly truthful, he had no existence till M. Anatole France's philosophic mind and human sympathy have called him up from his nothingness for our pleasure, and, as the title-page of the book has it, no doubt for our profit also.

Therefore we behold him in the dock, a stranger to all historical, political or social considerations which can be brought to bear upon his case. He remains lost in astonishment. Penetrated with respect, overwhelmed with awe, he is ready to trust the judge upon the question of his transgression. In his conscience he does not think himself culpable; but M. Anatole France's philosophical mind discovers for us that he feels all the insignificance of such a thing as the conscience of a mere street-hawker in the face of the symbols of the law and before the ministers of social repression. Crainquebille is innocent; but already the young advocate, his defender, has half persuaded him of his guilt.

On this phrase practically ends the introductory chapter of the story which, as the author's dedication states, has inspired an admirable draughtsman and a skilful dramatist, each in his art, to a vision of tragic grandeur. And this opening chapter without a name — consisting of two and a half pages, some four hundred words at most — is a masterpiece of insight and simplicity, resumed in M. Anatole France's distinction of thought and in his princely command of words.

It is followed by six more short chapters, concise and full, delicate and complete like the petals of a flower, presenting to us the Adventure of Crainquebille — Crainquebille before the justice — An Apology for the President of the Tribunal — Of the Submission of Crainquebille to the Laws of the Republic — Of his Attitude before the Public Opinion, and so on to the chapter of the Last Consequences. We see, created for us in his outward form and innermost perplexity, the old man degraded from his high estate of a law-abiding street-hawker and driven to insult, really this time, the majesty of the social order in the person of another police-constable. It is not an act of revolt, and still less of revenge. Crainquebille is too old, too resigned, too weary, too guileless to raise the black standard of insurrection. He is cold and homeless and starving. He remembers the warmth and the food of the prison. He perceives the means to get back there. Since he has been locked up, he argues with himself, for uttering words which, as a matter of fact he did not say, he will go forth now, and to the first policeman he meets will say those very words in order to be imprisoned again. Thus reasons Crainquebille with simplicity and confidence. He accepts facts. Nothing surprises him. But all the phenomena of social organisation and of his own life remain for him mysterious to the end. The description of the policeman in his short cape and hood, who stands quite still, under the light of a street lamp at the edge of the pavement shining with the wet of a rainy autumn evening along the whole extent of a long and deserted thoroughfare, is a perfect piece of imaginative precision. From under the edge of the hood his eyes look upon Crainquebille, who has just uttered in an uncertain voice the sacramental, insulting phrase of the popular slang — Mort

aux vaches! They look upon him shining in the deep shadow of the hood with an expression of sadness, vigilance, and contempt.

He does not move. Crainquebille, in a feeble and hesitating voice, repeats once more the insulting words. But this policeman is full of philosophic superiority, disdain, and indulgence. He refuses to take in charge the old and miserable vagabond who stands before him shivering and ragged in the drizzle. And the ruined Crainquebille, victim of a ridiculous miscarriage of justice, appalled at this magnanimity, passes on hopelessly down the street full of shadows where the lamps gleam each in a ruddy halo of falling mist.

M. Anatole France can speak for the people. This prince of the Senate is invested with the tribunitian power. M. Anatole France is something of a Socialist; and in that respect he seems to depart from his sceptical philosophy. But as an illustrious statesman, now no more, a great prince too, with an ironic mind and a literary gift, has sarcastically remarked in one of his public speeches: "We are all Socialists now." And in the sense in which it may be said that we all in Europe are Christians that is true enough. To many of us Socialism is merely an emotion. An emotion is much and is also less than nothing. It is the initial impulse. The real Socialism of to-day is a religion. It has its dogmas. The value of the dogma does not consist in its truthfulness, and M. Anatole France, who loves truth, does not love dogma. Only, unlike religion, the cohesive strength of Socialism lies not in its dogmas but in its ideal. It is perhaps a too materialistic ideal, and the mind of M. Anatole France may not find in it either comfort or consolation. It is not to be doubted that he suspects this himself; but there is something reposeful in the finality of popular conceptions. M. Anatole France, a good prince and a good Republican, will succeed no doubt in being a good Socialist. He will disregard the stupidity of the dogma and the unlovely form of the ideal. His art will find its own beauty in the imaginative presentation of wrongs, of errors, and miseries that call aloud for redress. M. Anatole France is humane. He is also human. He may be able to discard his philosophy; to forget that the evils are many and the remedies are few, that there is no universal panacea, that fatality is invincible, that there is an implacable menace of death in the triumph of the humanitarian idea. He may forget all that because love is stronger than truth.

Besides "Crainquebille" this volume contains sixteen other stories and sketches. To define them it is enough to say that they are written in M. Anatole France's prose. One sketch entitled "Riquet" may be found incorporated in the volume of Monsieur Bergeret à Paris. "Putois" is a remarkable little tale, significant, humorous, amusing, and symbolic. It concerns the career of a man born in the utterance of a hasty and untruthful excuse made by a lady at a loss how to decline without offence a very pressing invitation to dinner from a very tyrannical aunt. This happens in a provincial town, and the lady says in effect: "Impossible, my dear aunt. To-morrow I am expecting the gardener." And the garden she glances at is a poor garden; it is a wild garden; its extent is insignificant and its neglect seems beyond remedy. "A gardener! What for?" asks the aunt. "To work in the garden." And the poor lady is abashed at the transparence of her evasion. But the lie is told, it is believed, and she sticks to it. When the masterful old aunt inquires, "What is the man's name, my dear?" she answers brazenly, "His name is Putois." "Where does he live?" "Oh, I don't know; anywhere. He won't give his address. One leaves a message for him here and there." "Oh! I see," says the other; "he is a sort of ne'er do well, an idler, a vagabond. I advise you, my dear, to be careful how you let such a creature into your grounds; but I have a large garden, and when you do not want his services I shall find him some work to do, and see he does it too. Tell your Putois to come and see me." And thereupon Putois is born; he stalks abroad, invisible, upon his career of vagabondage and crime, stealing melons from gardens and tea-spoons from pantries, indulging his licentious proclivities; becoming the talk of the town and of the countryside; seen simultaneously in far-distant places; pursued by gendarmes, whose brigadier assures the uneasy householders that he "knows that scamp very well, and won't be long in laying his hands upon him." A detailed description of his person collected from the information furnished by various people appears in the columns of a local newspaper. Putois lives in his strength and malevolence. He lives after the manner of legendary heroes, of the gods of Olympus. He is the creation of the popular mind. There comes a time when even the innocent originator of that mysterious and potent evil-doer is induced to believe for a moment that

he may have a real and tangible presence. All this is told with the wit and the art and the philosophy which is familiar to M. Anatole France's readers and admirers. For it is difficult to read M. Anatole France without admiring him. He has the princely gift of arousing a spontaneous loyalty, but with this difference, that the consent of our reason has its place by the side of our enthusiasm. He is an artist. As an artist he awakens emotion. The quality of his art remains, as an inspiration, fascinating and inscrutable; but the proceedings of his thought compel our intellectual admiration.

In this volume the trifle called "The Military Manoeuvres at Montil," apart from its far-reaching irony, embodies incidentally the very spirit of automobilism. Somehow or other, how you cannot tell, the flight over the country in a motor-car, its sensations, its fatigue, its vast topographical range, its incidents down to the bursting of a tyre, are brought home to you with all the force of high imaginative perception. It would be out of place to analyse here the means by which the true impression is conveyed so that the absurd rushing about of General Decuir, in a 30-horse-power car, in search of his cavalry brigade, becomes to you a more real experience than any day-and-night run you may ever have taken yourself. Suffice it to say that M. Anatole France had thought the thing worth doing and that it becomes, in virtue of his art, a distinct achievement. And there are other sketches in this book, more or less slight, but all worthy of regard — the childhood's recollections of Professor Bergeret and his sister Zoé; the dialogue of the two upright judges and the conversation of their horses; the dream of M. Jean Marteau, aimless, extravagant, apocalyptic, and of all the dreams one ever dreamt, the most essentially dreamlike. The vision of M. Anatole France, the Prince of Prose, ranges over all the extent of his realm, indulgent and penetrating, disillusioned and curious, finding treasures of truth and beauty concealed from less gifted magicians. Contemplating the exactness of his images and the justice of his judgment, the freedom of his fancy and the fidelity of his purpose, one becomes aware of the futility of literary watchwords and the vanity of all the schools of fiction. Not that M. Anatole France is a wild and untrammelled genius. He is not that. Issued legitimately from the past, he is mindful of his high descent. He has a critical temperament joined to creative power. He surveys his vast domain in a spirit of princely moderation that knows nothing of excesses but much of restraint.

Chapter 2 — "l'île Des Pingouins"

M. Anatole France, historian and adventurer, has given us many profitable histories of saints and sinners, of Roman procurators and of officials of the Third Republic, of grandes dames and of dames not so very grand, of ornate Latinists and of inarticulate street hawkers, of priests and generals — in fact, the history of all humanity as it appears to his penetrating eye, serving a mind marvellously incisive in its scepticism, and a heart that, of all contemporary hearts gifted with a voice, contains the greatest treasure of charitable irony. As to M. Anatole France's adventures, these are well-known. They lie open to this prodigal world in the four volumes of the Vie Littéraire, describing the adventures of a choice soul amongst masterpieces. For such is the romantic view M. Anatole France takes of the life of a literary critic. History and adventure, then, seem to be the chosen fields for the magnificent evolutions of M. Anatole France's prose; but no material limits can stand in the way of a genius. The latest book from his pen — which may be called golden, as the lips of an eloquent saint once upon a time were acclaimed golden by the faithful — this latest book is, up to a certain point, a book of travel.

I would not mislead a public whose confidence I court. The book is not a record of globe-trotting. I regret it. It would have been a joy to watch M. Anatole France pouring the clear elixir compounded of his Pyrrhonic philosophy, his Benedictine erudition, his gentle wit and most humane irony into such an unpromising and opaque vessel. He would have attempted it in a spirit of benevolence towards his fellow men and of compassion for that life of the earth which is but a vain and transitory illusion. M. Anatole France is a great magician, yet there seem to be tasks which he dare not face. For he is also a sage.

It is a book of ocean travel — not, however, as understood by Herr Ballin of Hamburg, the Machiavel of the Atlantic. It is a book of exploration and discovery — not, however, as conceived by an enterprising journal and a shrewdly philanthropic king of the nineteenth century. It is nothing so recent as that. It dates much further back; long, long before the dark age when Krupp of Essen wrought at his steel plates and a German Emperor condescendingly suggested the last improvements in ships' dining-tables. The best idea of the inconceivable antiquity of that enterprise I can give you is by stating the nature of the explorer's ship. It was a trough of stone, a vessel of hollowed granite.

The explorer was St. Maël, a saint of Armorica. I had never heard of him before, but I believe now in his arduous existence with a faith which is a tribute to M. Anatole France's pious earnestness and delicate irony. St. Maël existed. It is distinctly stated of him that his life was a progress in virtue. Thus it seems that there may be saints that are not progressively virtuous. St. Maël was not of that kind. He was industrious. He evangelised the heathen. He erected two hundred and eighteen chapels and seventy-four abbeys. Indefatigable navigator of the faith, he drifted casually in the miraculous trough of stone from coast to coast and from island to island along the northern seas. At the age of eighty-four his high stature was bowed by his long labours, but his sinewy arms preserved their vigour and his rude eloquence had lost nothing of its force.

A nautical devil tempting him by the worldly suggestion of fitting out his desultory, miraculous trough with mast, sail, and rudder for swifter progression (the idea of haste has sprung from the pride of Satan), the simple old saint lent his ear to the subtle arguments of the progressive enemy of mankind.

The venerable St. Maël fell away from grace by not perceiving at once that a gift of heaven cannot be improved by the contrivances of human ingenuity. His punishment was adequate. A terrific tempest snatched the rigged ship of stone in its whirlwinds, and, to be brief, the dazed St. Maël was stranded violently on the Island of Penguins.

The saint wandered away from the shore. It was a flat, round island whence rose in the centre a conical mountain capped with clouds. The rain was falling incessantly — a gentle, soft rain which caused the simple saint to exclaim in great delight: "This is the island of tears, the island of contrition!"

Meantime the inhabitants had flocked in their tens of thousands to an amphitheatre of rocks; they were penguins; but the holy man, rendered deaf and purblind by his years, mistook excusably the multitude of silly, erect, and self-important birds for a human crowd. At once he began to preach to them the doctrine of salvation. Having finished his discourse he lost no time in administering to his interesting congregation the sacrament of baptism.

If you are at all a theologian you will see that it was no mean adventure to happen to a well-meaning and zealous saint. Pray reflect on the magnitude of the issues! It is easy to believe what M. Anatole France says, that, when the baptism of the Penguins became known in Paradise, it caused there neither joy nor sorrow, but a profound sensation.

M. Anatole France is no mean theologian himself. He reports with great casuistical erudition the debates in the saintly council assembled in Heaven for the consideration of an event so disturbing to the economy of religious mysteries. Ultimately the baptised Penguins had to be turned into human beings; and together with the privilege of sublime hopes these innocent birds received the curse of original sin, with the labours, the miseries, the passions, and the weaknesses attached to the fallen condition of humanity.

At this point M. Anatole France is again an historian. From being the Hakluyt of a saintly adventurer he turns (but more concisely) into the Gibbon of Imperial Penguins. Tracing the development of their civilisation, the absurdity of their desires, the pathos of their folly and the ridiculous littleness of their quarrels, his golden pen lightens by relevant but unpuritanical anecdotes the austerity of a work devoted to a subject so grave as the Polity of Penguins. It is a very admirable treatment, and I hasten to congratulate all men of receptive mind on the feast of wisdom which is theirs for the mere plucking of a book from a shelf.

TURGENEV {2} — 1917

Dear Edward,

I am glad to hear that you are about to publish a study of Turgenev, that fortunate artist who has found so much in life for us and no doubt for himself, with the exception of bare justice. Perhaps that will come to him, too, in time. Your study may help the consummation. For his luck persists after his death. What greater luck an artist like Turgenev could wish for than to find in the English-speaking world a translator who has missed none of the most delicate, most simple beauties of his work, and a critic who has known how to analyse and point out its high qualities with perfect sympathy and insight.

After twenty odd years of friendship (and my first literary friendship too) I may well permit myself to make that statement, while thinking of your wonderful Prefaces as they appeared from time to time in the volumes of Turgenev's complete edition, the last of which came into the light of public indifference in the ninety-ninth year of the nineteenth century.

With that year one may say, with some justice, that the age of Turgenev had come to an end too; yet work so simple and human, so independent of the transitory formulas and theories of art, belongs as you point out in the Preface to Smoke "to all time."

Turgenev's creative activity covers about thirty years. Since it came to an end the social and political events in Russia have moved at an accelerated pace, but the deep origins of them, in the moral and intellectual unrest of the souls, are recorded in the whole body of his work with the unerring lucidity of a great national writer. The first stirrings, the first gleams of the great forces can be seen almost in every page of the novels, of the short stories and of A Sportsman's Sketches — those marvellous landscapes peopled by unforgettable figures.

Those will never grow old. Fashions in monsters do change, but the truth of humanity goes on for ever, unchangeable and inexhaustible in the variety of its disclosures. Whether Turgenev's art, which has captured it with such mastery and such gentleness, is for "all time" it is hard to say. Since, as you say yourself, he brings all his problems and characters to the test of love, we may hope that it will endure at least till the infinite emotions of love are replaced by the exact simplicity of perfected Eugenics. But even by then, I think, women would not have changed much; and the women of Turgenev who understood them so tenderly, so reverently and so passionately — they, at least, are certainly for all time.

Women are, one may say, the foundation of his art. They are Russian of course. Never was a writer so profoundly, so whole-souledly national. But for non-Russian readers, Turgenev's Russia is but a canvas on which the incomparable artist of humanity lays his colours and his forms in the great light and the free air of the world. Had he invented them all and also every stick and stone, brook and hill and field in which they move, his personages would have been just as true and as poignant in their perplexed lives. They are his own and also universal. Any one can accept them with no more question than one accepts the Italians of Shakespeare.

In the larger, non-Russian view, what should make Turgenev sympathetic and welcome to the English-speaking world, is his essential humanity. All his creations, fortunate and unfortunate, oppressed and oppressors, are human beings, not strange beasts in a menagerie or damned souls knocking themselves to pieces in the stuffy darkness of mystical contradictions. They are human beings, fit to live, fit to suffer, fit to struggle, fit to win, fit to lose, in the endless and inspiring game of pursuing from day to day the ever-receding future.

I began by calling him lucky, and he was, in a sense. But one ends by having some doubts. To be so great without the slightest parade and so fine without any tricks of "cleverness" must be fatal to any man's influence with his contemporaries.

Frankly, I don't want to appear as qualified to judge of things Russian. It wouldn't be true. I know nothing of them. But I am aware of a few general truths, such as, for instance, that no man, whatever may be the loftiness of his character, the purity of his motives and the peace of his conscience — no man, I say, likes to be beaten with sticks during the greater part of his existence. From what one knows of his history it appears clearly that in Russia almost any stick was good enough to beat Turgenev with in his latter years. When he died the characteristically chicken-hearted Autocracy hastened to stuff his mortal envelope into the tomb it refused to honour, while the sensitive Revolutionists went on for a time

flinging after his shade those jeers and curses from which that impartial lover of all his countrymen had suffered so much in his lifetime. For he, too, was sensitive. Every page of his writing bears its testimony to the fatal absence of callousness in the man.

And now he suffers a little from other things. In truth it is not the convulsed terror-haunted Dostoievski but the serene Turgenev who is under a curse. For only think! Every gift has been heaped on his cradle: absolute sanity and the deepest sensibility, the clearest vision and the quickest responsiveness, penetrating insight and unfailing generosity of judgment, an exquisite perception of the visible world and an unerring instinct for the significant, for the essential in the life of men and women, the clearest mind, the warmest heart, the largest sympathy — and all that in perfect measure. There's enough there to ruin the prospects of any writer. For you know very well, my dear Edward, that if you had Antinous himself in a booth of the world's fair, and killed yourself in protesting that his soul was as perfect as his body, you wouldn't get one per cent. of the crowd struggling next door for a sight of the Double-headed Nightingale or of some weak-kneed giant grinning through a horse collar.

J. C.

Stephen Crane — a Note Without Dates — 1919

My acquaintance with Stephen Crane was brought about by Mr. Pawling, partner in the publishing firm of Mr. William Heinemann.

One day Mr. Pawling said to me: "Stephen Crane has arrived in England. I asked him if there was anybody he wanted to meet and he mentioned two names. One of them was yours." I had then just been reading, like the rest of the world, Crane's Red Badge of Courage. The subject of that story was war, from the point of view of an individual soldier's emotions. That individual (he remains nameless throughout) was interesting enough in himself, but on turning over the pages of that little book which had for the moment secured such a noisy recognition I had been even more interested in the personality of the writer. The picture of a simple and untried youth becoming through the needs of his country part of a great fighting machine was presented with an earnestness of purpose, a sense of tragic issues, and an imaginative force of expression which struck me as quite uncommon and altogether worthy of admiration.

Apparently Stephen Crane had received a favourable impression from the reading of the Nigger of the Narcissus, a book of mine which had also been published lately. I was truly pleased to hear this.

On my next visit to town we met at a lunch. I saw a young man of medium stature and slender build, with very steady, penetrating blue eyes, the eyes of a being who not only sees visions but can brood over them to some purpose.

He had indeed a wonderful power of vision, which he applied to the things of this earth and of our mortal humanity with a penetrating force that seemed to reach, within life's appearances and forms, the very spirit of life's truth. His ignorance of the world at large — he had seen very little of it — did not stand in the way of his imaginative grasp of facts, events, and picturesque men.

His manner was very quiet, his personality at first sight interesting, and he talked slowly with an intonation which on some people, mainly Americans, had, I believe, a jarring effect. But not on me. Whatever he said had a personal note, and he expressed himself with a graphic simplicity which was extremely engaging. He knew little of literature, either of his own country or of any other, but he was himself a wonderful artist in words whenever he took a pen into his hand. Then his gift came out — and it was seen then to be much more than mere felicity of language. His impressionism of phrase went really deeper than the surface. In his writing he was very sure of his effects. I don't think he was ever in doubt about what he could do. Yet it often seemed to me that he was but half aware of the exceptional quality of his achievement.

This achievement was curtailed by his early death. It was a great loss to his friends, but perhaps not so much to literature. I think that he had given his measure fully in the few books he had the time to write. Let me not be misunderstood: the loss was great, but it was the loss of the delight his art could give, not the loss of any further possible revelation. As to himself, who can say how much he gained or lost by quitting so early this world of the living, which he knew how to set before us in the terms of his own artistic vision? Perhaps he did not lose a great deal. The recognition he was accorded was rather languid and given him grudgingly. The worthiest welcome he secured for his tales in this country was from Mr. W. Henley in the New Review and later, towards the end of his life, from the late Mr. William Blackwood in his magazine. For the rest I must say that during his sojourn in England he had the misfortune to be, as the French say, mal entouré. He was beset by people who understood not the quality of his genius and were antagonistic to the deeper fineness of his nature. Some of them have died

since, but dead or alive they are not worth speaking about now. I don't think he had any illusions about them himself: yet there was a strain of good-nature and perhaps of weakness in his character which prevented him from shaking himself free from their worthless and patronising attentions, which in those days caused me much secret irritation whenever I stayed with him in either of his English homes. My wife and I like best to remember him riding to meet us at the gate of the Park at Brede. Born master of his sincere impressions, he was also a born horseman. He never appeared so happy or so much to advantage as on the back of a horse. He had formed the project of teaching my eldest boy to ride, and meantime, when the child was about two years old, presented him with his first dog.

I saw Stephen Crane a few days after his arrival in London. I saw him for the last time on his last day in England. It was in Dover, in a big hotel, in a bedroom with a large window looking on to the sea. He had been very ill and Mrs. Crane was taking him to some place in Germany, but one glance at that wasted face was enough to tell me that it was the most forlorn of all hopes. The last words he breathed out to me were: "I am tired. Give my love to your wife and child." When I stopped at the door for another look I saw that he had turned his head on the pillow and was staring wistfully out of the window at the sails of a cutter yacht that glided slowly across the frame, like a dim shadow against the grey sky.

Those who have read his little tale, "Horses," and the story, "The Open Boat," in the volume of that name, know with what fine understanding he loved horses and the sea. And his passage on this earth was like that of a horseman riding swiftly in the dawn of a day fated to be short and without sunshine.

Tales of the Sea — 1898

It is by his irresistible power to reach the adventurous side in the character, not only of his own, but of all nations, that Marryat is largely human. He is the enslaver of youth, not by the literary artifices of presentation, but by the natural glamour of his own temperament. To his young heroes the beginning of life is a splendid and warlike lark, ending at last in inheritance and marriage. His novels are not the outcome of his art, but of his character, like the deeds that make up his record of naval service. To the artist his work is interesting as a completely successful expression of an unartistic nature. It is absolutely amazing to us, as the disclosure of the spirit animating the stirring time when the nineteenth century was young. There is an air of fable about it. Its loss would be irreparable, like the curtailment of national story or the loss of an historical document. It is the beginning and the embodiment of an inspiring tradition.

To this writer of the sea the sea was not an element. It was a stage, where was displayed an exhibition of valour, and of such achievement as the world had never seen before. The greatness of that achievement cannot be pronounced imaginary, since its reality has affected the destinies of nations; nevertheless, in its grandeur it has all the remoteness of an ideal. History preserves the skeleton of facts and, here and there, a figure or a name; but it is in Marryat's novels that we find the mass of the nameless, that we see them in the flesh, that we obtain a glimpse of the everyday life and an insight into the spirit animating the crowd of obscure men who knew how to build for their country such a shining monument of memories.

Marryat is really a writer of the Service. What sets him apart is his fidelity. His pen serves his country as well as did his professional skill and his renowned courage. His figures move about between water and sky, and the water and the sky are there only to frame the deeds of the Service. His novels, like amphibious creatures, live on the sea and frequent the shore, where they flounder deplorably. The loves and the hates of his boys are as primitive as their virtues and their vices. His women, from the beautiful Agnes to the witch-like mother of Lieutenant Vanslyperken, are, with the exception of the sailors' wives, like the shadows of what has never been. His Silvas, his Ribieras, his Shriftens, his Delmars remind us of people we have heard of somewhere, many times, without ever believing in their existence. His morality is honourable and conventional. There is cruelty in his fun and he can invent puns in the midst of carnage. His naïveties are perpetrated in a lurid light. There is an endless variety of types, all surface, with hard edges, with memorable eccentricities of outline, with a childish and heroic effect in the drawing. They do not belong to life; they belong exclusively to the Service. And yet they live; there is a truth in them, the truth of their time; a headlong, reckless audacity, an intimacy with violence, an unthinking fearlessness, and an exuberance of vitality which only years of war and victories can give. His adventures are enthralling; the rapidity of his action fascinates; his method is crude, his sentimentality, obviously incidental, is often factitious. His greatness is undeniable.

It is undeniable. To a multitude of readers the navy of to-day is Marryat's navy still. He has created a priceless legend. If he be not immortal, yet he will last long enough for the highest ambition, because he has dealt manfully with an inspiring phase in the history of that Service on which the life of his country depends. The tradition of the great past he has fixed in his pages will be cherished for ever as the guarantee of the future. He loved his country first, the Service next, the sea perhaps not at all. But the sea loved him without reserve. It gave him his professional distinction and his author's fame — a fame such as not often falls to the lot of a true artist.

At the same time, on the other side of the Atlantic, another man wrote of the sea with true artistic instinct. He is not invincibly young and heroic; he is mature and human, though for him also the stress

of adventure and endeavour must end fatally in inheritance and marriage. For James Fenimore Cooper nature was not the frame-work, it was an essential part of existence. He could hear its voice, he could understand its silence, and he could interpret both for us in his prose with all that felicity and sureness of effect that belong to a poetical conception alone. His fame, as wide but less brilliant than that of his contemporary, rests mostly on a novel which is not of the sea. But he loved the sea and looked at it with consummate understanding. In his sea tales the sea inter-penetrates with life; it is in a subtle way a factor in the problem of existence, and, for all its greatness, it is always in touch with the men, who, bound on errands of war or gain, traverse its immense solitudes. His descriptions have the magistral ampleness of a gesture indicating the sweep of a vast horizon. They embrace the colours of sunset, the peace of starlight, the aspects of calm and storm, the great loneliness of the waters, the stillness of watchful coasts, and the alert readiness which marks men who live face to face with the promise and the menace of the sea.

He knows the men and he knows the sea. His method may be often faulty, but his art is genuine. The truth is within him. The road to legitimate realism is through poetical feeling, and he possesses that — only it is expressed in the leisurely manner of his time. He has the knowledge of simple hearts. Long Tom Coffin is a monumental seaman with the individuality of life and the significance of a type. It is hard to believe that Manual and Borroughcliffe, Mr. Marble of Marble-Head, Captain Tuck of the packet-ship Montauk, or Daggett, the tenacious commander of the Sea Lion of Martha's Vineyard, must pass away some day and be utterly forgotten. His sympathy is large, and his humour is as genuine — and as perfectly unaffected — as is his art. In certain passages he reaches, very simply, the heights of inspired vision.

He wrote before the great American language was born, and he wrote as well as any novelist of his time. If he pitches upon episodes redounding to the glory of the young republic, surely England has glory enough to forgive him, for the sake of his excellence, the patriotic bias at her expense. The interest of his tales is convincing and unflagging; and there runs through his work a steady vein of friendliness for the old country which the succeeding generations of his compatriots have replaced by a less definite sentiment.

Perhaps no two authors of fiction influenced so many lives and gave to so many the initial impulse towards a glorious or a useful career. Through the distances of space and time those two men of another race have shaped also the life of the writer of this appreciation. Life is life, and art is art — and truth is hard to find in either. Yet in testimony to the achievement of both these authors it may be said that, in the case of the writer at least, the youthful glamour, the headlong vitality of the one and the profound sympathy, the artistic insight of the other — to which he had surrendered — have withstood the brutal shock of facts and the wear of laborious years. He has never regretted his surrender.

AN OBSERVER IN MALAYA {3} — 1898

In his new volume, Mr. Hugh Clifford, at the beginning of the sketch entitled "At the Heels of the White Man," expresses his anxiety as to the state of England's account in the Day-Book of the Recording Angel "for the good and the bad we have done — both with the most excellent intentions." The intentions will, no doubt, count for something, though, of course, every nation's conquests are paved with good intentions; or it may be that the Recording Angel, looking compassionately at the strife of hearts, may disdain to enter into the Eternal Book the facts of a struggle which has the reward of its righteousness even on this earth — in victory and lasting greatness, or in defeat and humiliation.

And, also, love will count for much. If the opinion of a looker-on from afar is worth anything, Mr. Hugh Clifford's anxiety about his country's record is needless. To the Malays whom he governs, instructs, and guides he is the embodiment of the intentions, of the conscience and might of his race. And of all the nations conquering distant territories in the name of the most excellent intentions, England alone sends out men who, with such a transparent sincerity of feeling, can speak, as Mr. Hugh Clifford does, of the place of toil and exile as "the land which is very dear to me, where the best years of my life have been spent" — and where (I would stake my right hand on it) his name is pronounced with respect and affection by those brown men about whom he writes.

All these studies are on a high level of interest, though not all on the same level. The descriptive chapters, results of personal observation, seem to me the most interesting. And, indeed, in a book of this kind it is the author's personality which awakens the greatest interest; it shapes itself before one in the ring of sentences, it is seen between the lines — like the progress of a traveller in the jungle that may be traced by the sound of the parang chopping the swaying creepers, while the man himself is glimpsed, now and then, indistinct and passing between the trees. Thus in his very vagueness of appearance, the writer seen through the leaves of his book becomes a fascinating companion in a land of fascination.

It is when dealing with the aspects of nature that Mr. Hugh Clifford is most convincing. He looks upon them lovingly, for the land is "very dear to him," and he records his cherished impressions so that the forest, the great flood, the jungle, the rapid river, and the menacing rock dwell in the memory of the reader long after the book is closed. He does not say anything, in so many words, of his affection for those who live amid the scenes he describes so well, but his humanity is large enough to pardon us if we suspect him of such a rare weakness. In his preface he expresses the regret at not having the gifts (whatever they may be) of the kailyard school, or — looking up to a very different plane — the genius of Mr. Barrie. He has, however, gifts of his own, and his genius has served his country and his fortunes in another direction. Yet it is when attempting what he professes himself unable to do, in telling us the simple story of Ûmat, the punkah-puller, with unaffected simplicity and half-concealed tenderness, that he comes nearest to artistic achievement.

Each study in this volume presents some idea, illustrated by a fact told without artifice, but with an elective sureness of knowledge. The story of Tukang Burok's love, related in the old man's own words, conveys the very breath of Malay thought and speech. In "His Little Bill," the coolie, Lim Teng Wah, facing his debtor, stands very distinct before us, an insignificant and tragic victim of fate with whom he had quarrelled to the death over a matter of seven dollars and sixty-eight cents. The story of "The Schooner with a Past" may be heard, from the Straits eastward, with many variations. Out in the Pacific the schooner becomes a cutter, and the pearl-divers are replaced by the Black-birds of the Labour Trade. But Mr. Hugh Clifford's variation is very good. There is a passage in it — a trifle — just the diver as seen coming up from the depths, that in its dozen lines or so attains to distinct artistic value. And, scattered through the book, there are many other passages of almost equal descriptive excellence.

Nevertheless, to apply artistic standards to this book would be a fundamental error in appreciation. Like faith, enthusiasm, or heroism, art veils part of the truth of life to make the rest appear more splendid, inspiring, or sinister. And this book is only truth, interesting and futile, truth unadorned, simple and straightforward. The Resident of Pahang has the devoted friendship of Ûmat, the punkah-puller, he has an individual faculty of vision, a large sympathy, and the scrupulous consciousness of the good and evil in his hands. He may as well rest content with such gifts. One cannot expect to be, at the same time, a ruler of men and an irreproachable player on the flute.

A Happy Wanderer — 1910

Converts are interesting people. Most of us, if you will pardon me for betraying the universal secret, have, at some time or other, discovered in ourselves a readiness to stray far, ever so far, on the wrong road. And what did we do in our pride and our cowardice? Casting fearful glances and waiting for a dark moment, we buried our discovery discreetly, and kept on in the old direction, on that old, beaten track we have not had courage enough to leave, and which we perceive now more clearly than before to be but the arid way of the grave.

The convert, the man capable of grace (I am speaking here in a secular sense), is not discreet. His pride is of another kind; he jumps gladly off the track — the touch of grace is mostly sudden — and facing about in a new direction may even attain the illusion of having turned his back on Death itself.

Some converts have, indeed, earned immortality by their exquisite indiscretion. The most illustrious example of a convert, that Flower of chivalry, Don Quixote de la Mancha, remains for all the world the only genuine immortal hidalgo. The delectable Knight of Spain became converted, as you know, from the ways of a small country squire to an imperative faith in a tender and sublime mission. Forthwith he was beaten with sticks and in due course shut up in a wooden cage by the Barber and the Priest, the fit ministers of a justly shocked social order. I do not know if it has occurred to anybody yet to shut up Mr. Luffmann in a wooden cage. {4} I do not raise the point because I wish him any harm. Quite the contrary. I am a humane person. Let him take it as the highest praise — but I must say that he richly deserves that sort of attention.

On the other hand I would not have him unduly puffed up with the pride of the exalted association. The grave wisdom, the admirable amenity, the serene grace of the secular patron-saint of all mortals converted to noble visions are not his. Mr. Luffmann has no mission. He is no Knight sublimely Errant. But he is an excellent Vagabond. He is full of merit. That peripatetic guide, philosopher and friend of all nations, Mr. Roosevelt, would promptly excommunicate him with a big stick. The truth is that the ex-autocrat of all the States does not like rebels against the sullen order of our universe. Make the best of it or perish — he cries. A sane lineal successor of the Barber and the Priest, and a sagacious political heir of the incomparable Sancho Panza (another great Governor), that distinguished littérateur has no mercy for dreamers. And our author happens to be a man of (you may trace them in his books) some rather fine reveries.

Every convert begins by being a rebel, and I do not see myself how any mercy can possibly be extended to Mr. Luffmann. He is a convert from the creed of strenuous life. For this renegade the body is of little account; to him work appears criminal when it suppresses the demands of the inner life; while he was young he did grind virtuously at the sacred handle, and now, he says, he has fallen into disgrace with some people because he believes no longer in toil without end. Certain respectable folk hate him — so he says — because he dares to think that "poetry, beauty, and the broad face of the world are the best things to be in love with." He confesses to loving Spain on the ground that she is "the land of to-morrow, and holds the gospel of never-mind." The universal striving to push ahead he considers mere vulgar folly. Didn't I tell you he was a fit subject for the cage?

It is a relief (we are all humane, are we not?) to discover that this desperate character is not altogether an outcast. Little girls seem to like him. One of them, after listening to some of his tales, remarked to her mother, "Wouldn't it be lovely if what he says were true!" Here you have Woman! The charming creatures will neither strain at a camel nor swallow a gnat. Not publicly. These operations, without which the world they have such a large share in could not go on for ten minutes, are left to us — men. And then we are chided for being coarse. This is a refined objection but does not seem fair. Another

little girl — or perhaps the same little girl — wrote to him in Cordova, "I hope Poste-Restante is a nice place, and that you are very comfortable." Woman again! I have in my time told some stories which are (I hate false modesty) both true and lovely. Yet no little girl ever wrote to me in kindly terms. And why? Simply because I am not enough of a Vagabond. The dear despots of the fireside have a weakness for lawless characters. This is amiable, but does not seem rational.

Being Quixotic, Mr. Luffmann is no Impressionist. He is far too earnest in his heart, and not half sufficiently precise in his style to be that. But he is an excellent narrator. More than any Vagabond I have ever met, he knows what he is about. There is not one of his quiet days which is dull. You will find in them a love-story not made up, the coup-de-foudre, the lightning-stroke of Spanish love; and you will marvel how a spell so sudden and vehement can be at the same time so tragically delicate. You will find there landladies devoured with jealousy, astute housekeepers, delightful boys, wise peasants, touchy shopkeepers, all the cosas de España — and, in addition, the pale girl Rosario. I recommend that pathetic and silent victim of fate to your benevolent compassion. You will find in his pages the humours of starving workers of the soil, the vision among the mountains of an exulting mad spirit in a mighty body, and many other visions worthy of attention. And they are exact visions, for this idealist is no visionary. He is in sympathy with suffering mankind, and has a grasp on real human affairs. I mean the great and pitiful affairs concerned with bread, love, and the obscure, unexpressed needs which drive great crowds to prayer in the holy places of the earth.

But I like his conception of what a "quiet" life is like! His quiet days require no fewer than forty-two of the forty-nine provinces of Spain to take their ease in. For his unquiet days, I presume, the seven — or is it nine? — crystal spheres of Alexandrian cosmogony would afford, but a wretchedly straitened space. A most unconventional thing is his notion of quietness. One would take it as a joke; only that, perchance, to the author of Quiet Days in Spain all days may seem quiet, because, a courageous convert, he is now at peace with himself.

How better can we take leave of this interesting Vagabond than with the road salutation of passing wayfarers: "And on you be peace! . . . You have chosen your ideal, and it is a good choice. There's nothing like giving up one's life to an unselfish passion. Let the rich and the powerful of this globe preach their sound gospel of palpable progress. The part of the ideal you embrace is the better one, if only in its illusions. No great passion can be barren. May a world of gracious and poignant images attend the lofty solitude of your renunciation!"

The Life Beyond — 1910

You have no doubt noticed that certain books produce a sort of physical effect on one — mostly an audible effect. I am not alluding here to Blue books or to books of statistics. The effect of these is simply exasperating and no more. No! the books I have in mind are just the common books of commerce you and I read when we have five minutes to spare, the usual hired books published by ordinary publishers, printed by ordinary printers, and censored (when they happen to be novels) by the usual circulating libraries, the guardians of our firesides, whose names are household words within the four seas.

To see the fair and the brave of this free country surrendering themselves with unbounded trust to the direction of the circulating libraries is very touching. It is even, in a sense, a beautiful spectacle, because, as you know, humility is a rare and fragrant virtue; and what can be more humble than to surrender your morals and your intellect to the judgment of one of your tradesmen? I suppose that there are some very perfect people who allow the Army and Navy Stores to censor their diet. So much merit, however, I imagine, is not frequently met with here below. The flesh, alas! is weak, and — from a certain point of view — so important!

A superficial person might be rendered miserable by the simple question: What would become of us if the circulating libraries ceased to exist? It is a horrid and almost indelicate supposition, but let us be brave and face the truth. On this earth of ours nothing lasts. Tout passe, tout casse, tout lasse. Imagine the utter wreck overtaking the morals of our beautiful country-houses should the circulating libraries suddenly die! But pray do not shudder. There is no occasion.

Their spirit shall survive. I declare this from inward conviction, and also from scientific information received lately. For observe: the circulating libraries are human institutions. I beg you to follow me closely. They are human institutions, and being human, they are not animal, and, therefore, they are spiritual. Thus, any man with enough money to take a shop, stock his shelves, and pay for advertisements shall be able to evoke the pure and censorious spectre of the circulating libraries whenever his own commercial spirit moves him.

For, and this is the information alluded to above, Science, having in its infinite wanderings run up against various wonders and mysteries, is apparently willing now to allow a spiritual quality to man and, I conclude, to all his works as well.

I do not know exactly what this "Science" may be; and I do not think that anybody else knows; but that is the information stated shortly. It is contained in a book reposing under my thoughtful eyes. {5} I know it is not a censored book, because I can see for myself that it is not a novel. The author, on his side, warns me that it is not philosophy, that it is not metaphysics, that it is not natural science. After this comprehensive warning, the definition of the book becomes, you will admit, a pretty hard nut to crack.

But meantime let us return for a moment to my opening remark about the physical effect of some common, hired books. A few of them (not necessarily books of verse) are melodious; the music some others make for you as you read has the disagreeable emphasis of a barrel-organ; the tinkling-cymbals book (it was not written by a humorist) I only met once. But there is infinite variety in the noises books do make. I have now on my shelves a book apparently of the most valuable kind which, before I have read half-a-dozen lines, begins to make a noise like a buzz-saw. I am inconsolable; I shall never, I fear, discover what it is all about, for the buzzing covers the words, and at every try I am absolutely forced to give it up ere the end of the page is reached.

The book, however, which I have found so difficult to define, is by no means noisy. As a mere piece of writing it may be described as being breathless itself and taking the reader's breath away, not by

the magnitude of its message but by a sort of anxious volubility in the delivery. The constantly elusive argument and the illustrative quotations go on without a single reflective pause. For this reason alone the reading of that work is a fatiguing process.

The author himself (I use his own words) "suspects" that what he has written "may be theology after all." It may be. It is not my place either to allay or to confirm the author's suspicion of his own work. But I will state its main thesis: "That science regarded in the gross dictates the spirituality of man and strongly implies a spiritual destiny for individual human beings." This means: Existence after Death — that is, Immortality.

To find out its value you must go to the book. But I will observe here that an Immortality liable at any moment to betray itself fatuously by the forcible incantations of Mr. Stead or Professor Crookes is scarcely worth having. Can you imagine anything more squalid than an Immortality at the beck and call of Eusapia Palladino? That woman lives on the top floor of a Neapolitan house, and gets our poor, pitiful, august dead, flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone, spirit of our spirit, who have loved, suffered and died, as we must love, suffer, and die — she gets them to beat tambourines in a corner and protrude shadowy limbs through a curtain. This is particularly horrible, because, if one had to put one's faith in these things one could not even die safely from disgust, as one would long to do.

And to believe that these manifestations, which the author evidently takes for modern miracles, will stay our tottering faith; to believe that the new psychology has, only the other day, discovered man to be a "spiritual mystery," is really carrying humility towards that universal provider, Science, too far.

* * * * *

We moderns have complicated our old perplexities to the point of absurdity; our perplexities older than religion itself. It is not for nothing that for so many centuries the priest, mounting the steps of the altar, murmurs, "Why art thou sad, my soul, and why dost thou trouble me?" Since the day of Creation two veiled figures, Doubt and Melancholy, are pacing endlessly in the sunshine of the world. What humanity needs is not the promise of scientific immortality, but compassionate pity in this life and infinite mercy on the Day of Judgment.

And, for the rest, during this transient hour of our pilgrimage, we may well be content to repeat the Invocation of Sar Peladan. Sar Peladan was an occultist, a seer, a modern magician. He believed in astrology, in the spirits of the air, in elves; he was marvellously and deliciously absurd. Incidentally he wrote some incomprehensible poems and a few pages of harmonious prose, for, you must know, "a magician is nothing else but a great harmonist." Here are some eight lines of the magnificent Invocation. Let me, however, warn you, strictly between ourselves, that my translation is execrable. I am sorry to say I am no magician.

"O Nature, indulgent Mother, forgive! Open your arms to the son, prodigal and weary.

"I have attempted to tear asunder the veil you have hung to conceal from us the pain of life, and I have been wounded by the mystery. . . . Œdipus, half way to finding the word of the enigma, young Faust, regretting already the simple life, the life of the heart, I come back to you repentant, reconciled, O gentle deceiver!"

The Ascending Effort — 1910

Much good paper has been lamentably wasted to prove that science has destroyed, that it is destroying, or, some day, may destroy poetry. Meantime, unblushing, unseen, and often unheard, the guileless poets have gone on singing in a sweet strain. How they dare do the impossible and virtually forbidden thing is a cause for wonder but not for legislation. Not yet. We are at present too busy reforming the silent burglar and planning concerts to soothe the savage breast of the yelling hooligan. As somebody — perhaps a publisher — said lately: "Poetry is of no account now-a-days."

But it is not totally neglected. Those persons with gold-rimmed spectacles whose usual occupation is to spy upon the obvious have remarked audibly (on several occasions) that poetry has so far not given to science any acknowledgment worthy of its distinguished position in the popular mind. Except that Tennyson looked down the throat of a foxglove, that Erasmus Darwin wrote The Loves of the Plants and a scoffer The Loves of the Triangles, poets have been supposed to be indecorously blind to the progress of science. What tribute, for instance, has poetry paid to electricity? All I can remember on the spur of the moment is Mr. Arthur Symons' line about arc lamps: "Hung with the globes of some unnatural fruit."

Commerce and Manufacture praise on every hand in their not mute but inarticulate way the glories of science. Poetry does not play its part. Behold John Keats, skilful with the surgeon's knife; but when he writes poetry his inspiration is not from the operating table. Here I am reminded, though, of a modern instance to the contrary in prose. Mr. H. G. Wells, who, as far as I know, has never written a line of verse, was inspired a few years ago to write a short story, Under the Knife. Out of a clock-dial, a brass rod, and a whiff of chloroform, he has conjured for us a sensation of space and eternity, evoked the face of the Unknowable, and an awesome, august voice, like the voice of the Judgment Day; a great voice, perhaps the voice of science itself, uttering the words: "There shall be no more pain!" I advise you to look up that story, so human and so intimate, because Mr. Wells, the writer of prose whose amazing inventiveness we all know, remains a poet even in his most perverse moments of scorn for things as they are. His poetic imagination is sometimes even greater than his inventiveness, I am not afraid to say. But, indeed, imaginative faculty would make any man a poet — were he born without tongue for speech and without hands to seize his fancy and fasten her down to a wretched piece of paper.

* * * * *

The book {6} which in the course of the last few days I have opened and shut several times is not imaginative. But, on the other hand, it is not a dumb book, as some are. It has even a sort of sober and serious eloquence, reminding us that not poetry alone is at fault in this matter. Mr. Bourne begins his Ascending Effort with a remark by Sir Francis Galton upon Eugenics that "if the principles he was advocating were to become effective they must be introduced into the national conscience, like a new religion." "Introduced" suggests compulsory vaccination. Mr. Bourne, who is not a theologian, wishes to league together not science and religion, but science and the arts. "The intoxicating power of art," he thinks, is the very thing needed to give the desired effect to the doctrines of science. In uninspired phrase he points to the arts playing once upon a time a part in "popularising the Christian tenets." With painstaking fervour as great as the fervour of prophets, but not so persuasive, he foresees the arts some day popularising science. Until that day dawns, science will continue to be lame and poetry blind. He himself cannot smooth or even point out the way, though he thinks that "a really prudent people would be greedy of beauty," and their public authorities "as careful of the sense of comfort as of sanitation."

As the writer of those remarkable rustic note-books, The Bettesworth Book and Memoirs of a Surrey Labourer, the author has a claim upon our attention. But his seriousness, his patience, his almost

touching sincerity, can only command the respect of his readers and nothing more. He is obsessed by science, haunted and shadowed by it, until he has been bewildered into awe. He knows, indeed, that art owes its triumphs and its subtle influence to the fact that it issues straight from our organic vitality, and is a movement of life-cells with their matchless unintellectual knowledge. But the fact that poetry does not seem obviously in love with science has never made him doubt whether it may not be an argument against his haste to see the marriage ceremony performed amid public rejoicings.

Many a man has heard or read and believes that the earth goes round the sun; one small blob of mud among several others, spinning ridiculously with a waggling motion like a top about to fall. This is the Copernican system, and the man believes in the system without often knowing as much about it as its name. But while watching a sunset he sheds his belief; he sees the sun as a small and useful object, the servant of his needs and the witness of his ascending effort, sinking slowly behind a range of mountains, and then he holds the system of Ptolemy. He holds it without knowing it. In the same way a poet hears, reads, and believes a thousand undeniable truths which have not yet got into his blood, nor will do after reading Mr. Bourne's book; he writes, therefore, as if neither truths nor book existed. Life and the arts follow dark courses, and will not turn aside to the brilliant arc-lights of science. Some day, without a doubt, — and it may be a consolation to Mr. Bourne to know it — fully informed critics will point out that Mr. Davies's poem on a dark woman combing her hair must have been written after the invasion of appendicitis, and that Mr. Yeats's "Had I the heaven's embroidered cloths" came before radium was quite unnecessarily dragged out of its respectable obscurity in pitchblende to upset the venerable (and comparatively naive) chemistry of our young days.

There are times when the tyranny of science and the cant of science are alarming, but there are other times when they are entertaining — and this is one of them. "Many a man prides himself" says Mr. Bourne, "on his piety or his views of art, whose whole range of ideas, could they be investigated, would be found ordinary, if not base, because they have been adopted in compliance with some external persuasion or to serve some timid purpose instead of proceeding authoritatively from the living selection of his hereditary taste." This extract is a fair sample of the book's thought and of its style. But Mr. Bourne seems to forget that "persuasion" is a vain thing. The appreciation of great art comes from within.

It is but the merest justice to say that the transparent honesty of Mr. Bourne's purpose is undeniable. But the whole book is simply an earnest expression of a pious wish; and, like the generality of pious wishes, this one seems of little dynamic value — besides being impracticable.

Yes, indeed. Art has served Religion; artists have found the most exalted inspiration in Christianity; but the light of Transfiguration which has illuminated the profoundest mysteries of our sinful souls is not the light of the generating stations, which exposes the depths of our infatuation where our mere cleverness is permitted for a while to grope for the unessential among invincible shadows.

The Censor of Plays — an Appreciation — 1907

A couple of years ago I was moved to write a one-act play — and I lived long enough to accomplish the task. We live and learn. When the play was finished I was informed that it had to be licensed for performance. Thus I learned of the existence of the Censor of Plays. I may say without vanity that I am intelligent enough to have been astonished by that piece of information: for facts must stand in some relation to time and space, and I was aware of being in England — in the twentieth-century England. The fact did not fit the date and the place. That was my first thought. It was, in short, an improper fact. I beg you to believe that I am writing in all seriousness and am weighing my words scrupulously.

Therefore I don't say inappropriate. I say improper — that is: something to be ashamed of. And at first this impression was confirmed by the obscurity in which the figure embodying this after all considerable fact had its being. The Censor of Plays! His name was not in the mouths of all men. Far from it. He seemed stealthy and remote. There was about that figure the scent of the far East, like the peculiar atmosphere of a Mandarin's back yard, and the mustiness of the Middle Ages, that epoch when mankind tried to stand still in a monstrous illusion of final certitude attained in morals, intellect and conscience.

It was a disagreeable impression. But I reflected that probably the censorship of plays was an inactive monstrosity; not exactly a survival, since it seemed obviously at variance with the genius of the people, but an heirloom of past ages, a bizarre and imported curiosity preserved because of that weakness one has for one's old possessions apart from any intrinsic value; one more object of exotic virtù, an Oriental potiche, a magot chinois conceived by a childish and extravagant imagination, but allowed to stand in stolid impotence in the twilight of the upper shelf.

Thus I quieted my uneasy mind. Its uneasiness had nothing to do with the fate of my one-act play. The play was duly produced, and an exceptionally intelligent audience stared it coldly off the boards. It ceased to exist. It was a fair and open execution. But having survived the freezing atmosphere of that auditorium I continued to exist, labouring under no sense of wrong. I was not pleased, but I was content. I was content to accept the verdict of a free and independent public, judging after its conscience the work of its free, independent and conscientious servant — the artist.

Only thus can the dignity of artistic servitude be preserved — not to speak of the bare existence of the artist and the self-respect of the man. I shall say nothing of the self-respect of the public. To the self-respect of the public the present appeal against the censorship is being made and I join in it with all my heart.

For I have lived long enough to learn that the monstrous and outlandish figure, the magot chinois whom I believed to be but a memorial of our forefathers' mental aberration, that grotesque potiche, works! The absurd and hollow creature of clay seems to be alive with a sort of (surely) unconscious life worthy of its traditions. It heaves its stomach, it rolls its eyes, it brandishes a monstrous arm: and with the censorship, like a Bravo of old Venice with a more carnal weapon, stabs its victim from behind in the twilight of its upper shelf. Less picturesque than the Venetian in cloak and mask, less estimable, too, in this, that the assassin plied his moral trade at his own risk deriving no countenance from the powers of the Republic, it stands more malevolent, inasmuch that the Bravo striking in the dusk killed but the body, whereas the grotesque thing nodding its mandarin head may in its absurd unconsciousness strike down at any time the spirit of an honest, of an artistic, perhaps of a sublime creation.

This Chinese monstrosity, disguised in the trousers of the Western Barbarian and provided by the State with the immortal Mr. Stiggins's plug hat and umbrella, is with us. It is an office. An office of trust. And from time to time there is found an official to fill it. He is a public man. The least prominent of public men, the most unobtrusive, the most obscure if not the most modest.

But however obscure, a public man may be told the truth if only once in his life. His office flourishes in the shade; not in the rustic shade beloved of the violet but in the muddled twilight of mind, where tyranny of every sort flourishes. Its holder need not have either brain or heart, no sight, no taste, no imagination, not even bowels of compassion. He needs not these things. He has power. He can kill thought, and incidentally truth, and incidentally beauty, providing they seek to live in a dramatic form. He can do it, without seeing, without understanding, without feeling anything; out of mere stupid suspicion, as an irresponsible Roman Cæsar could kill a senator. He can do that and there is no one to say him nay. He may call his cook (Molière used to do that) from below and give her five acts to judge every morning as a matter of constant practice and still remain the unquestioned destroyer of men's honest work. He may have a glass too much. This accident has happened to persons of unimpeachable morality — to gentlemen. He may suffer from spells of imbecility like Clodius. He may . . . what might he not do! I tell you he is the Cæsar of the dramatic world. There has been since the Roman Principate nothing in the way of irresponsible power to compare with the office of the Censor of Plays.

Looked at in this way it has some grandeur, something colossal in the odious and the absurd. This figure in whose power it is to suppress an intellectual conception — to kill thought (a dream for a mad brain, my masters!) — seems designed in a spirit of bitter comedy to bring out the greatness of a Philistine's conceit and his moral cowardice.

But this is England in the twentieth century, and one wonders that there can be found a man courageous enough to occupy the post. It is a matter for meditation. Having given it a few minutes I come to the conclusion in the serenity of my heart and the peace of my conscience that he must be either an extreme megalomaniac or an utterly unconscious being.

He must be unconscious. It is one of the qualifications for his magistracy. Other qualifications are equally easy. He must have done nothing, expressed nothing, imagined nothing. He must be obscure, insignificant and mediocre — in thought, act, speech and sympathy. He must know nothing of art, of life — and of himself. For if he did he would not dare to be what he is. Like that much questioned and mysterious bird, the phoenix, he sits amongst the cold ashes of his predecessor upon the altar of morality, alone of his kind in the sight of wondering generations.

And I will end with a quotation reproducing not perhaps the exact words but the true spirit of a lofty conscience.

"Often when sitting down to write the notice of a play, especially when I felt it antagonistic to my canons of art, to my tastes or my convictions, I hesitated in the fear lest my conscientious blame might check the development of a great talent, my sincere judgment condemn a worthy mind. With the pen poised in my hand I hesitated, whispering to myself 'What if I were perchance doing my part in killing a masterpiece.'"

Such were the lofty scruples of M. Jules Lemaître — dramatist and dramatic critic, a great citizen and a high magistrate in the Republic of Letters; a Censor of Plays exercising his august office openly in the light of day, with the authority of a European reputation. But then M. Jules Lemaître is a man possessed of wisdom, of great fame, of a fine conscience — not an obscure hollow Chinese monstrosity ornamented with Mr. Stiggins's plug hat and cotton umbrella by its anxious grandmother — the State.

Frankly, is it not time to knock the improper object off its shelf? It has stood too long there. Hatched in Pekin (I should say) by some Board of Respectable Rites, the little caravan monster has come to us by way of Moscow — I suppose. It is outlandish. It is not venerable. It does not belong here. Is it not time to knock it off its dark shelf with some implement appropriate to its worth and status? With an old broom handle for instance.

Part 2 — Life

Autocracy and War — 1905

From the firing of the first shot on the banks of the Sha-ho, the fate of the great battle of the Russo-Japanese war hung in the balance for more than a fortnight. The famous three-day battles, for which history has reserved the recognition of special pages, sink into insignificance before the struggles in Manchuria engaging half a million men on fronts of sixty miles, struggles lasting for weeks, flaming up fiercely and dying away from sheer exhaustion, to flame up again in desperate persistence, and end — as we have seen them end more than once — not from the victor obtaining a crushing advantage, but through the mortal weariness of the combatants.

We have seen these things, though we have seen them only in the cold, silent, colourless print of books and newspapers. In stigmatising the printed word as cold, silent and colourless, I have no intention of putting a slight upon the fidelity and the talents of men who have provided us with words to read about the battles in Manchuria. I only wished to suggest that in the nature of things, the war in the Far East has been made known to us, so far, in a grey reflection of its terrible and monotonous phases of pain, death, sickness; a reflection seen in the perspective of thousands of miles, in the dim atmosphere of official reticence, through the veil of inadequate words. Inadequate, I say, because what had to be reproduced is beyond the common experience of war, and our imagination, luckily for our peace of mind, has remained a slumbering faculty, notwithstanding the din of humanitarian talk and the real progress of humanitarian ideas. Direct vision of the fact, or the stimulus of a great art, can alone make it turn and open its eyes heavy with blessed sleep; and even there, as against the testimony of the senses and the stirring up of emotion, that saving callousness which reconciles us to the conditions of our existence, will assert itself under the guise of assent to fatal necessity, or in the enthusiasm of a purely æsthetic admiration of the rendering. In this age of knowledge our sympathetic imagination, to which alone we can look for the ultimate triumph of concord and justice, remains strangely impervious to information, however correctly and even picturesquely conveyed. As to the vaunted eloquence of a serried array of figures, it has all the futility of precision without force. It is the exploded superstition of enthusiastic statisticians. An over-worked horse falling in front of our windows, a man writhing under a cart-wheel in the streets awaken more genuine emotion, more horror, pity, and indignation than the stream of reports, appalling in their monotony, of tens of thousands of decaying bodies tainting the air of the Manchurian plains, of other tens of thousands of maimed bodies groaning in ditches, crawling on the frozen ground, filling the field hospitals; of the hundreds of thousands of survivors no less pathetic and even more tragic in being left alive by fate to the wretched exhaustion of their pitiful toil.

An early Victorian, or perhaps a pre-Victorian, sentimentalist, looking out of an upstairs window, I believe, at a street — perhaps Fleet Street itself — full of people, is reported, by an admiring friend, to have wept for joy at seeing so much life. These arcadian tears, this facile emotion worthy of the golden age, comes to us from the past, with solemn approval, after the close of the Napoleonic wars and before the series of sanguinary surprises held in reserve by the nineteenth century for our hopeful grandfathers. We may well envy them their optimism of which this anecdote of an amiable wit and sentimentalist presents an extreme instance, but still, a true instance, and worthy of regard in the spontaneous testimony to that trust in the life of the earth, triumphant at last in the felicity of her children. Moreover, the psychology of individuals, even in the most extreme instances, reflects the general effect of the fears and hopes of its time. Wept for joy! I should think that now, after eighty years, the emotion would be of a sterner sort. One could not imagine anybody shedding tears of joy at the sight of much life in a street, unless, perhaps, he were an enthusiastic officer of a general staff or a popular politician, with a career yet to make. And hardly even that. In the case of the first tears would

be unprofessional, and a stern repression of all signs of joy at the provision of so much food for powder more in accord with the rules of prudence; the joy of the second would be checked before it found issue in weeping by anxious doubts as to the soundness of these electors' views upon the question of the hour, and the fear of missing the consensus of their votes.

No! It seems that such a tender joy would be misplaced now as much as ever during the last hundred years, to go no further back. The end of the eighteenth century was, too, a time of optimism and of dismal mediocrity in which the French Revolution exploded like a bombshell. In its lurid blaze the insufficiency of Europe, the inferiority of minds, of military and administrative systems, stood exposed with pitiless vividness. And there is but little courage in saying at this time of the day that the glorified French Revolution itself, except for its destructive force, was in essentials a mediocre phenomenon. The parentage of that great social and political upheaval was intellectual, the idea was elevated; but it is the bitter fate of any idea to lose its royal form and power, to lose its "virtue" the moment it descends from its solitary throne to work its will among the people. It is a king whose destiny is never to know the obedience of his subjects except at the cost of degradation. The degradation of the ideas of freedom and justice at the root of the French Revolution is made manifest in the person of its heir; a personality without law or faith, whom it has been the fashion to represent as an eagle, but who was, in truth, more like a sort of vulture preying upon the body of a Europe which did, indeed, for some dozen of years, very much resemble a corpse. The subtle and manifold influence for evil of the Napoleonic episode as a school of violence, as a sower of national hatreds, as the direct provocator of obscurantism and reaction, of political tyranny and injustice, cannot well be exaggerated.

The nineteenth century began with wars which were the issue of a corrupted revolution. It may be said that the twentieth begins with a war which is like the explosive ferment of a moral grave, whence may yet emerge a new political organism to take the place of a gigantic and dreaded phantom. For a hundred years the ghost of Russian might, overshadowing with its fantastic bulk the councils of Central and Western Europe, sat upon the gravestone of autocracy, cutting off from air, from light, from all knowledge of themselves and of the world, the buried millions of Russian people. Not the most determined cockney sentimentalist could have had the heart to weep for joy at the thought of its teeming numbers! And yet they were living, they are alive yet, since, through the mist of print, we have seen their blood freezing crimson upon the snow of the squares and streets of St. Petersburg; since their generations born in the grave are yet alive enough to fill the ditches and cover the fields of Manchuria with their torn limbs; to send up from the frozen ground of battlefields a chorus of groans calling for vengeance from Heaven; to kill and retreat, or kill and advance, without intermission or rest for twenty hours, for fifty hours, for whole weeks of fatigue, hunger, cold, and murder — till their ghastly labour, worthy of a place amongst the punishments of Dante's Inferno, passing through the stages of courage, of fury, of hopelessness, sinks into the night of crazy despair.

It seems that in both armies many men are driven beyond the bounds of sanity by the stress of moral and physical misery. Great numbers of soldiers and regimental officers go mad as if by way of protest against the peculiar sanity of a state of war: mostly among the Russians, of course. The Japanese have in their favour the tonic effect of success; and the innate gentleness of their character stands them in good stead. But the Japanese grand army has yet another advantage in this nerve-destroying contest, which for endless, arduous toil of killing surpasses all the wars of history. It has a base for its operations; a base of a nature beyond the concern of the many books written upon the so-called art of war, which, considered by itself, purely as an exercise of human ingenuity, is at best only a thing of well-worn, simple artifices. The Japanese army has for its base a reasoned conviction; it has behind it the profound belief in the right of a logical necessity to be appeased at the cost of so much blood and treasure. And in that belief, whether well or ill founded, that army stands on the high ground of conscious assent, shouldering deliberately the burden of a long-tried faithfulness. The other people (since each people is an army nowadays), torn out from a miserable quietude resembling death itself, hurled across space, amazed, without starting-point of its own or knowledge of the aim, can feel nothing but a horror-stricken consciousness of having mysteriously become the plaything of a black and merciless fate.

The profound, the instructive nature of this war is resumed by the memorable difference in the spiritual state of the two armies; the one forlorn and dazed on being driven out from an abyss of mental darkness into the red light of a conflagration, the other with a full knowledge of its past and its future, "finding itself" as it were at every step of the trying war before the eyes of an astonished world. The greatness of the lesson has been dwarfed for most of us by an often half-conscious prejudice of race-difference. The West having managed to lodge its hasty foot on the neck of the East, is prone to forget that it is from the East that the wonders of patience and wisdom have come to a world of men who set the value of life in the power to act rather than in the faculty of meditation. It has been dwarfed by this, and it has been obscured by a cloud of considerations with whose shaping wisdom and meditation had little or nothing to do; by the weary platitudes on the military situation which (apart from geographical conditions) is the same everlasting situation that has prevailed since the times of Hannibal and Scipio, and further back yet, since the beginning of historical record — since prehistoric times, for that matter; by the conventional expressions of horror at the tale of maiming and killing; by the rumours of peace with guesses more or less plausible as to its conditions. All this is made legitimate by the consecrated custom of writers in such time as this — the time of a great war. More legitimate in view of the situation created in Europe are the speculations as to the course of events after the war. More legitimate, but hardly more wise than the irresponsible talk of strategy that never changes, and of terms of peace that do not matter.

And above it all — unaccountably persistent — the decrepit, old, hundred years old, spectre of Russia's might still faces Europe from across the teeming graves of Russian people. This dreaded and strange apparition, bristling with bayonets, armed with chains, hung over with holy images; that something not of this world, partaking of a ravenous ghoul, of a blind Djinn grown up from a cloud, and of the Old Man of the Sea, still faces us with its old stupidity, with its strange mystical arrogance, stamping its shadowy feet upon the gravestone of autocracy already cracked beyond repair by the torpedoes of Togo and the guns of Oyama, already heaving in the blood-soaked ground with the first stirrings of a resurrection.

Never before had the Western world the opportunity to look so deep into the black abyss which separates a soulless autocracy posing as, and even believing itself to be, the arbiter of Europe, from the benighted, starved souls of its people. This is the real object-lesson of this war, its unforgettable information. And this war's true mission, disengaged from the economic origins of that contest, from doors open or shut, from the fields of Korea for Russian wheat or Japanese rice, from the ownership of ice-free ports and the command of the waters of the East — its true mission was to lay a ghost. It has accomplished it. Whether Kuropatkin was incapable or unlucky, whether or not Russia issuing next year, or the year after next, from behind a rampart of piled-up corpses will win or lose a fresh campaign, are minor considerations. The task of Japan is done, the mission accomplished; the ghost of Russia's might is laid. Only Europe, accustomed so long to the presence of that portent, seems unable to comprehend that, as in the fables of our childhood, the twelve strokes of the hour have rung, the cock has crowed, the apparition has vanished — never to haunt again this world which has been used to gaze at it with vague dread and many misgivings.

It was a fascination. And the hallucination still lasts as inexplicable in its persistence as in its duration. It seems so unaccountable, that the doubt arises as to the sincerity of all that talk as to what Russia will or will not do, whether it will raise or not another army, whether it will bury the Japanese in Manchuria under seventy millions of sacrificed peasants' caps (as her Press boasted a little more than a year ago) or give up to Japan that jewel of her crown, Saghalien, together with some other things; whether, perchance, as an interesting alternative, it will make peace on the Amur in order to make war beyond the Oxus.

All these speculations (with many others) have appeared gravely in print; and if they have been gravely considered by only one reader out of each hundred, there must be something subtly noxious to the human brain in the composition of newspaper ink; or else it is that the large page, the columns of words, the leaded headings, exalt the mind into a state of feverish credulity. The printed page of the

Press makes a sort of still uproar, taking from men both the power to reflect and the faculty of genuine feeling; leaving them only the artificially created need of having something exciting to talk about.

The truth is that the Russia of our fathers, of our childhood, of our middle-age; the testamentary Russia of Peter the Great — who imagined that all the nations were delivered into the hand of Tsardom — can do nothing. It can do nothing because it does not exist. It has vanished for ever at last, and as yet there is no new Russia to take the place of that ill-omened creation, which, being a fantasy of a madman's brain, could in reality be nothing else than a figure out of a nightmare seated upon a monument of fear and oppression.

The true greatness of a State does not spring from such a contemptible source. It is a matter of logical growth, of faith and courage. Its inspiration springs from the constructive instinct of the people, governed by the strong hand of a collective conscience and voiced in the wisdom and counsel of men who seldom reap the reward of gratitude. Many States have been powerful, but, perhaps, none have been truly great — as yet. That the position of a State in reference to the moral methods of its development can be seen only historically, is true. Perhaps mankind has not lived long enough for a comprehensive view of any particular case. Perhaps no one will ever live long enough; and perhaps this earth shared out amongst our clashing ambitions by the anxious arrangements of statesmen will come to an end before we attain the felicity of greeting with unanimous applause the perfect fruition of a great State. It is even possible that we are destined for another sort of bliss altogether: that sort which consists in being perpetually duped by false appearances. But whatever political illusion the future may hold out to our fear or our admiration, there will be none, it is safe to say, which in the magnitude of anti-humanitarian effect will equal that phantom now driven out of the world by the thunder of thousands of guns; none that in its retreat will cling with an equally shameless sincerity to more unworthy supports: to the moral corruption and mental darkness of slavery, to the mere brute force of numbers.

This very ignominy of infatuation should make clear to men's feelings and reason that the downfall of Russia's might is unavoidable. Spectral it lived and spectral it disappears without leaving a memory of a single generous deed, of a single service rendered — even involuntarily — to the polity of nations. Other despotisms there have been, but none whose origin was so grimly fantastic in its baseness, and the beginning of whose end was so gruesomely ignoble. What is amazing is the myth of its irresistible strength which is dying so hard.

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Considered historically, Russia's influence in Europe seems the most baseless thing in the world; a sort of convention invented by diplomatists for some dark purpose of their own, one would suspect, if the lack of grasp upon the realities of any given situation were not the main characteristic of the management of international relations. A glance back at the last hundred years shows the invariable, one may say the logical, powerlessness of Russia. As a military power it has never achieved by itself a single great thing. It has been indeed able to repel an ill-considered invasion, but only by having recourse to the extreme methods of desperation. In its attacks upon its specially selected victim this giant always struck as if with a withered right hand. All the campaigns against Turkey prove this, from Potemkin's time to the last Eastern war in 1878, entered upon with every advantage of a well-nursed prestige and a carefully fostered fanaticism. Even the half-armed were always too much for the might of Russia, or, rather, of the Tsardom. It was victorious only against the practically disarmed, as, in regard to its ideal of territorial expansion, a glance at a map will prove sufficiently. As an ally, Russia has been always unprofitable, taking her share in the defeats rather than in the victories of her friends, but always pushing her own claims with the arrogance of an arbiter of military success. She has been unable to help to any purpose a single principle to hold its own, not even the principle of authority and legitimism which Nicholas the First had declared so haughtily to rest under his special protection; just as Nicholas the Second has tried to make the maintenance of peace on earth his own exclusive affair. And the first Nicholas was a good Russian; he held the belief in the sacredness of his realm with such an intensity of faith that he could not survive the first shock of doubt. Rightly envisaged, the Crimean war was the end of what remained of absolutism and legitimism in Europe. It threw the way open for

the liberation of Italy. The war in Manchuria makes an end of absolutism in Russia, whoever has got to perish from the shock behind a rampart of dead ukases, manifestoes, and rescripts. In the space of fifty years the self-appointed Apostle of Absolutism and the self-appointed Apostle of Peace, the Augustus and the Augustulus of the régime that was wont to speak contemptuously to European Foreign Offices in the beautiful French phrases of Prince Gorchakov, have fallen victims, each after his kind, to their shadowy and dreadful familiar, to the phantom, part ghoul, part Djinn, part Old Man of the Sea, with beak and claws and a double head, looking greedily both east and west on the confines of two continents.

That nobody through all that time penetrated the true nature of the monster it is impossible to believe. But of the many who must have seen, all were either too modest, too cautious, perhaps too discreet, to speak; or else were too insignificant to be heard or believed. Yet not all.

In the very early sixties, Prince Bismarck, then about to leave his post of Prussian Minister in St. Petersburg, called — so the story goes — upon another distinguished diplomatist. After some talk upon the general situation, the future Chancellor of the German Empire remarked that it was his practice to resume the impressions he had carried out of every country where he had made a long stay, in a short sentence, which he caused to be engraved upon some trinket. "I am leaving this country now, and this is what I bring away from it," he continued, taking off his finger a new ring to show to his colleague the inscription inside: "La Russie, c'est le néant."

Prince Bismarck had the truth of the matter and was neither too modest nor too discreet to speak out. Certainly he was not afraid of not being believed. Yet he did not shout his knowledge from the house-tops. He meant to have the phantom as his accomplice in an enterprise which has set the clock of peace back for many a year.

He had his way. The German Empire has been an accomplished fact for more than a third of a century — a great and dreadful legacy left to the world by the ill-omened phantom of Russia's might.

It is that phantom which is disappearing now — unexpectedly, astonishingly, as if by a touch of that wonderful magic for which the East has always been famous. The pretence of belief in its existence will no longer answer anybody's purposes (now Prince Bismarck is dead) unless the purposes of the writers of sensational paragraphs as to this Néant making an armed descent upon the plains of India. That sort of folly would be beneath notice if it did not distract attention from the real problem created for Europe by a war in the Far East.

For good or evil in the working out of her destiny, Russia is bound to remain a Néant for many long years, in a more even than a Bismarckian sense. The very fear of this spectre being gone, it behoves us to consider its legacy — the fact (no phantom that) accomplished in Central Europe by its help and connivance.

The German Empire may feel at bottom the loss of an old accomplice always amenable to the confidential whispers of a bargain; but in the first instance it cannot but rejoice at the fundamental weakening of a possible obstacle to its instincts of territorial expansion. There is a removal of that latent feeling of restraint which the presence of a powerful neighbour, however implicated with you in a sense of common guilt, is bound to inspire. The common guilt of the two Empires is defined precisely by their frontier line running through the Polish provinces. Without indulging in excessive feelings of indignation at that country's partition, or going so far as to believe — with a late French politician — in the "immanente justice des choses," it is clear that a material situation, based upon an essentially immoral transaction, contains the germ of fatal differences in the temperament of the two partners in iniquity — whatever the iniquity is. Germany has been the evil counsellor of Russia on all the questions of her Polish problem. Always urging the adoption of the most repressive measures with a perfectly logical duplicity, Prince Bismarck's Empire has taken care to couple the neighbourly offers of military assistance with merciless advice. The thought of the Polish provinces accepting a frank reconciliation with a humanised Russia and bringing the weight of homogeneous loyalty within a few miles of Berlin, has been always intensely distasteful to the arrogant Germanising tendencies of the other partner in iniquity. And, besides, the way to the Baltic provinces leads over the Niemen and over the Vistula.

And now, when there is a possibility of serious internal disturbances destroying the sort of order autocracy has kept in Russia, the road over these rivers is seen wearing a more inviting aspect. At any moment the pretext of armed intervention may be found in a revolutionary outbreak provoked by Socialists, perhaps — but at any rate by the political immaturity of the enlightened classes and by the political barbarism of the Russian people. The throes of Russian resurrection will be long and painful. This is not the place to speculate upon the nature of these convulsions, but there must be some violent break-up of the lamentable tradition, a shattering of the social, of the administrative — certainly of the territorial — unity.

Voices have been heard saying that the time for reforms in Russia is already past. This is the superficial view of the more profound truth that for Russia there has never been such a time within the memory of mankind. It is impossible to initiate a rational scheme of reform upon a phase of blind absolutism; and in Russia there has never been anything else to which the faintest tradition could, after ages of error, go back as to a parting of ways.

In Europe the old monarchical principle stands justified in its historical struggle with the growth of political liberty by the evolution of the idea of nationality as we see it concreted at the present time; by the inception of that wider solidarity grouping together around the standard of monarchical power these larger, agglomerations of mankind. This service of unification, creating close-knit communities possessing the ability, the will, and the power to pursue a common ideal, has prepared the ground for the advent of a still larger understanding: for the solidarity of Europeanism, which must be the next step towards the advent of Concord and Justice; an advent that, however delayed by the fatal worship of force and the errors of national selfishness, has been, and remains, the only possible goal of our progress.

The conceptions of legality, of larger patriotism, of national duties and aspirations have grown under the shadow of the old monarchies of Europe, which were the creations of historical necessity. There were seeds of wisdom in their very mistakes and abuses. They had a past and a future; they were human. But under the shadow of Russian autocracy nothing could grow. Russian autocracy succeeded to nothing; it had no historical past, and it cannot hope for a historical future. It can only end. By no industry of investigation, by no fantastic stretch of benevolence, can it be presented as a phase of development through which a Society, a State, must pass on the way to the full consciousness of its destiny. It lies outside the stream of progress. This despotism has been utterly un-European. Neither has it been Asiatic in its nature. Oriental despotisms belong to the history of mankind; they have left their trace on our minds and our imagination by their splendour, by their culture, by their art, by the exploits of great conquerors. The record of their rise and decay has an intellectual value; they are in their origins and their course the manifestations of human needs, the instruments of racial temperament, of catastrophic force, of faith and fanaticism. The Russian autocracy as we see it now is a thing apart. It is impossible to assign to it any rational origin in the vices, the misfortunes, the necessities, or the aspirations of mankind. That despotism has neither an European nor an Oriental parentage; more, it seems to have no root either in the institutions or the follies of this earth. What strikes one with a sort of awe is just this something inhuman in its character. It is like a visitation, like a curse from Heaven falling in the darkness of ages upon the immense plains of forest and steppe lying dumbly on the confines of two continents: a true desert harbouring no Spirit either of the East or of the West.

This pitiful fate of a country held by an evil spell, suffering from an awful visitation for which the responsibility cannot be traced either to her sins or her follies, has made Russia as a nation so difficult to understand by Europe. From the very first ghastly dawn of her existence as a State she had to breathe the atmosphere of despotism; she found nothing but the arbitrary will of an obscure autocrat at the beginning and end of her organisation. Hence arises her impenetrability to whatever is true in Western thought. Western thought, when it crosses her frontier, falls under the spell of her autocracy and becomes a noxious parody of itself. Hence the contradictions, the riddles of her national life, which are looked upon with such curiosity by the rest of the world. The curse had entered her very soul; autocracy, and nothing else in the world, has moulded her institutions, and with the poison of slavery drugged the national temperament into the apathy of a hopeless fatalism. It seems to have gone into the

blood, tainting every mental activity in its source by a half-mystical, insensate, fascinating assertion of purity and holiness. The Government of Holy Russia, arrogating to itself the supreme power to torment and slaughter the bodies of its subjects like a God-sent scourge, has been most cruel to those whom it allowed to live under the shadow of its dispensation. The worst crime against humanity of that system we behold now crouching at bay behind vast heaps of mangled corpses is the ruthless destruction of innumerable minds. The greatest horror of the world — madness — walked faithfully in its train. Some of the best intellects of Russia, after struggling in vain against the spell, ended by throwing themselves at the feet of that hopeless despotism as a giddy man leaps into an abyss. An attentive survey of Russia's literature, of her Church, of her administration and the cross-currents of her thought, must end in the verdict that the Russia of to-day has not the right to give her voice on a single question touching the future of humanity, because from the very inception of her being the brutal destruction of dignity, of truth, of rectitude, of all that is faithful in human nature has been made the imperative condition of her existence. The great governmental secret of that imperium which Prince Bismarck had the insight and the courage to call Le Néant, has been the extirpation of every intellectual hope. To pronounce in the face of such a past the word Evolution, which is precisely the expression of the highest intellectual hope, is a gruesome pleasantry. There can be no evolution out of a grave. Another word of less scientific sound has been very much pronounced of late in connection with Russia's future, a word of more vague import, a word of dread as much as of hope — Revolution.

In the face of the events of the last four months, this word has sprung instinctively, as it were, on grave lips, and has been heard with solemn forebodings. More or less consciously, Europe is preparing herself for a spectacle of much violence and perhaps of an inspiring nobility of greatness. And there will be nothing of what she expects. She will see neither the anticipated character of the violence, nor yet any signs of generous greatness. Her expectations, more or less vaguely expressed, give the measure of her ignorance of that Néant which for so many years had remained hidden behind this phantom of invincible armies.

Néant! In a way, yes! And yet perhaps Prince Bismarck has let himself be led away by the seduction of a good phrase into the use of an inexact form. The form of his judgment had to be pithy, striking, engraved within a ring. If he erred, then, no doubt, he erred deliberately. The saying was near enough the truth to serve, and perhaps he did not want to destroy utterly by a more severe definition the prestige of the sham that could not deceive his genius. Prince Bismarck has been really complimentary to the useful phantom of the autocratic might. There is an awe-inspiring idea of infinity conveyed in the word Néant — and in Russia there is no idea. She is not a Néant, she is and has been simply the negation of everything worth living for. She is not an empty void, she is a yawning chasm open between East and West; a bottomless abyss that has swallowed up every hope of mercy, every aspiration towards personal dignity, towards freedom, towards knowledge, every ennobling desire of the heart, every redeeming whisper of conscience. Those that have peered into that abyss, where the dreams of Panslavism, of universal conquest, mingled with the hate and contempt for Western ideas, drift impotently like shapes of mist, know well that it is bottomless; that there is in it no ground for anything that could in the remotest degree serve even the lowest interests of mankind — and certainly no ground ready for a revolution. The sin of the old European monarchies was not the absolutism inherent in every form of government; it was the inability to alter the forms of their legality, grown narrow and oppressive with the march of time. Every form of legality is bound to degenerate into oppression, and the legality in the forms of monarchical institutions sooner, perhaps, than any other. It has not been the business of monarchies to be adaptive from within. With the mission of uniting and consolidating the particular ambitions and interests of feudalism in favour of a larger conception of a State, of giving self-consciousness, force and nationality to the scattered energies of thought and action, they were fated to lag behind the march of ideas they had themselves set in motion in a direction they could neither understand nor approve. Yet, for all that, the thrones still remain, and what is more significant, perhaps, some of the dynasties, too, have survived. The revolutions of European States have never been in the nature of absolute protests en masse against the monarchical principle; they were the uprising of the people against the oppressive

degeneration of legality. But there never has been any legality in Russia; she is a negation of that as of everything else that has its root in reason or conscience. The ground of every revolution had to be intellectually prepared. A revolution is a short cut in the rational development of national needs in response to the growth of world-wide ideals. It is conceivably possible for a monarch of genius to put himself at the head of a revolution without ceasing to be the king of his people. For the autocracy of Holy Russia the only conceivable self-reform is — suicide.

The same relentless fate holds in its grip the all-powerful ruler and his helpless people. Wielders of a power purchased by an unspeakable baseness of subjection to the Khans of the Tartar horde, the Princes of Russia who, in their heart of hearts had come in time to regard themselves as superior to every monarch of Europe, have never risen to be the chiefs of a nation. Their authority has never been sanctioned by popular tradition, by ideas of intelligent loyalty, of devotion, of political necessity, of simple expediency, or even by the power of the sword. In whatever form of upheaval autocratic Russia is to find her end, it can never be a revolution fruitful of moral consequences to mankind. It cannot be anything else but a rising of slaves. It is a tragic circumstance that the only thing one can wish to that people who had never seen face to face either law, order, justice, right, truth about itself or the rest of the world; who had known nothing outside the capricious will of its irresponsible masters, is that it should find in the approaching hour of need, not an organiser or a law-giver, with the wisdom of a Lycurgus or a Solon for their service, but at least the force of energy and desperation in some as yet unknown Spartacus.

A brand of hopeless mental and moral inferiority is set upon Russian achievements; and the coming events of her internal changes, however appalling they may be in their magnitude, will be nothing more impressive than the convulsions of a colossal body. As her boasted military force that, corrupt in its origin, has ever struck no other but faltering blows, so her soul, kept benumbed by her temporal and spiritual master with the poison of tyranny and superstition, will find itself on awakening possessed of no language, a monstrous full-grown child having first to learn the ways of living thought and articulate speech. It is safe to say tyranny, assuming a thousand protean shapes, will remain clinging to her struggles for a long time before her blind multitudes succeed at last in trampling her out of existence under their millions of bare feet.

That would be the beginning. What is to come after? The conquest of freedom to call your soul your own is only the first step on the road to excellence. We, in Europe, have gone a step or two further, have had the time to forget how little that freedom means. To Russia it must seem everything. A prisoner shut up in a noisome dungeon concentrates all his hope and desire on the moment of stepping out beyond the gates. It appears to him pregnant with an immense and final importance; whereas what is important is the spirit in which he will draw the first breath of freedom, the counsels he will hear, the hands he may find extended, the endless days of toil that must follow, wherein he will have to build his future with no other material but what he can find within himself.

It would be vain for Russia to hope for the support and counsel of collective wisdom. Since 1870 (as a distinguished statesman of the old tradition disconsolately exclaimed) “il n’y a plus d’Europe!” There is, indeed, no Europe. The idea of a Europe united in the solidarity of her dynasties, which for a moment seemed to dawn on the horizon of the Vienna Congress through the subsiding dust of Napoleonic alarums and excursions, has been extinguished by the larger glamour of less restraining ideals. Instead of the doctrines of solidarity it was the doctrine of nationalities much more favourable to spoliations that came to the front, and since its greatest triumphs at Sadowa and Sedan there is no Europe. Meanwhile till the time comes when there will be no frontiers, there are alliances so shamelessly based upon the exigencies of suspicion and mistrust that their cohesive force waxes and wanes with every year, almost with the event of every passing month. This is the atmosphere Russia will find when the last rampart of tyranny has been beaten down. But what hands, what voices will she find on coming out into the light of day? An ally she has yet who more than any other of Russia’s allies has found that it had parted with lots of solid substance in exchange for a shadow. It is true that the shadow was indeed the mightiest, the darkest that the modern world had ever known — and the most overbearing.

But it is fading now, and the tone of truest anxiety as to what is to take its place will come, no doubt, from that and no other direction, and no doubt, also, it will have that note of generosity which even in the moments of greatest aberration is seldom wanting in the voice of the French people.

Two neighbours Russia will find at her door. Austria, traditionally unaggressive whenever her hand is not forced, ruled by a dynasty of uncertain future, weakened by her duality, can only speak to her in an uncertain, bilingual phrase. Prussia, grown in something like forty years from an almost pitiful dependant into a bullying friend and evil counsellor of Russia's masters, may, indeed, hasten to extend a strong hand to the weakness of her exhausted body, but if so it will be only with the intention of tearing away the long-coveted part of her substance.

Pan-Germanism is by no means a shape of mists, and Germany is anything but a Néant where thought and effort are likely to lose themselves without sound or trace. It is a powerful and voracious organisation, full of unscrupulous self-confidence, whose appetite for aggrandisement will only be limited by the power of helping itself to the severed members of its friends and neighbours. The era of wars so eloquently denounced by the old Republicans as the peculiar blood guilt of dynastic ambitions is by no means over yet. They will be fought out differently, with lesser frequency, with an increased bitterness and the savage tooth-and-claw obstinacy of a struggle for existence. They will make us regret the time of dynastic ambitions, with their human absurdity moderated by prudence and even by shame, by the fear of personal responsibility and the regard paid to certain forms of conventional decency. For, if the monarchs of Europe have been derided for addressing each other as "brother" in autograph communications, that relationship was at least as effective as any form of brotherhood likely to be established between the rival nations of this continent, which, we are assured on all hands, is the heritage of democracy. In the ceremonial brotherhood of monarchs the reality of blood-ties, for what little it is worth, acted often as a drag on unscrupulous desires of glory or greed. Besides, there was always the common danger of exasperated peoples, and some respect for each other's divine right. No leader of a democracy, without other ancestry but the sudden shout of a multitude, and debarred by the very condition of his power from even thinking of a direct heir, will have any interest in calling brother the leader of another democracy — a chief as fatherless and heirless as himself.

The war of 1870, brought about by the third Napoleon's half-generous, half-selfish adoption of the principle of nationalities, was the first war characterised by a special intensity of hate, by a new note in the tune of an old song for which we may thank the Teutonic thoroughness. Was it not that excellent bourgeoise, Princess Bismarck (to keep only to great examples), who was so righteously anxious to see men, women and children — emphatically the children, too — of the abominable French nation massacred off the face of the earth? This illustration of the new war-temper is artlessly revealed in the prattle of the amiable Busch, the Chancellor's pet "reptile" of the Press. And this was supposed to be a war for an idea! Too much, however, should not be made of that good wife's and mother's sentiments any more than of the good First Emperor William's tears, shed so abundantly after every battle, by letter, telegram, and otherwise, during the course of the same war, before a dumb and shamefaced continent. These were merely the expressions of the simplicity of a nation which more than any other has a tendency to run into the grotesque. There is worse to come.

To-day, in the fierce grapple of two nations of different race, the short era of national wars seems about to close. No war will be waged for an idea. The "noxious idle aristocracies" of yesterday fought without malice for an occupation, for the honour, for the fun of the thing. The virtuous, industrious democratic States of to-morrow may yet be reduced to fighting for a crust of dry bread, with all the hate, ferocity, and fury that must attach to the vital importance of such an issue. The dreams sanguine humanitarians raised almost to ecstasy about the year fifty of the last century by the moving sight of the Crystal Palace — crammed full with that variegated rubbish which it seems to be the bizarre fate of humanity to produce for the benefit of a few employers of labour — have vanished as quickly as they had arisen. The golden hopes of peace have in a single night turned to dead leaves in every drawer of every benevolent theorist's writing table. A swift disenchantment overtook the incredible infatuation which could put its trust in the peaceful nature of industrial and commercial competition.

Industrialism and commercialism — wearing high-sounding names in many languages (Welt-politik may serve for one instance) picking up coins behind the severe and disdainful figure of science whose giant strides have widened for us the horizon of the universe by some few inches — stand ready, almost eager, to appeal to the sword as soon as the globe of the earth has shrunk beneath our growing numbers by another ell or so. And democracy, which has elected to pin its faith to the supremacy of material interests, will have to fight their battles to the bitter end, on a mere pittance — unless, indeed, some statesman of exceptional ability and overwhelming prestige succeeds in carrying through an international understanding for the delimitation of spheres of trade all over the earth, on the model of the territorial spheres of influence marked in Africa to keep the competitors for the privilege of improving the nigger (as a buying machine) from flying prematurely at each other's throats.

This seems the only expedient at hand for the temporary maintenance of European peace, with its alliances based on mutual distrust, preparedness for war as its ideal, and the fear of wounds, luckily stronger, so far, than the pinch of hunger, its only guarantee. The true peace of the world will be a place of refuge much less like a beleaguered fortress and more, let us hope, in the nature of an Inviolable Temple. It will be built on less perishable foundations than those of material interests. But it must be confessed that the architectural aspect of the universal city remains as yet inconceivable — that the very ground for its erection has not been cleared of the jungle.

Never before in history has the right of war been more fully admitted in the rounded periods of public speeches, in books, in public prints, in all the public works of peace, culminating in the establishment of the Hague Tribunal — that solemnly official recognition of the Earth as a House of Strife. To him whose indignation is qualified by a measure of hope and affection, the efforts of mankind to work its own salvation present a sight of alarming comicality. After clinging for ages to the steps of the heavenly throne, they are now, without much modifying their attitude, trying with touching ingenuity to steal one by one the thunderbolts of their Jupiter. They have removed war from the list of Heaven-sent visitations that could only be prayed against; they have erased its name from the supplication against the wrath of war, pestilence, and famine, as it is found in the litanies of the Roman Catholic Church; they have dragged the scourge down from the skies and have made it into a calm and regulated institution. At first sight the change does not seem for the better. Jove's thunderbolt looks a most dangerous plaything in the hands of the people. But a solemnly established institution begins to grow old at once in the discussion, abuse, worship, and execration of men. It grows obsolete, odious, and intolerable; it stands fatally condemned to an unhonoured old age.

Therein lies the best hope of advanced thought, and the best way to help its prospects is to provide in the fullest, frankest way for the conditions of the present day. War is one of its conditions; it is its principal condition. It lies at the heart of every question agitating the fears and hopes of a humanity divided against itself. The succeeding ages have changed nothing except the watchwords of the armies. The intellectual stage of mankind being as yet in its infancy, and States, like most individuals, having but a feeble and imperfect consciousness of the worth and force of the inner life, the need of making their existence manifest to themselves is determined in the direction of physical activity. The idea of ceasing to grow in territory, in strength, in wealth, in influence — in anything but wisdom and self-knowledge — is odious to them as the omen of the end. Action, in which is to be found the illusion of a mastered destiny, can alone satisfy our uneasy vanity and lay to rest the haunting fear of the future — a sentiment concealed, indeed, but proving its existence by the force it has, when invoked, to stir the passions of a nation. It will be long before we have learned that in the great darkness before us there is nothing that we need fear. Let us act lest we perish — is the cry. And the only form of action open to a State can be of no other than aggressive nature.

There are many kinds of aggressions, though the sanction of them is one and the same — the magazine rifle of the latest pattern. In preparation for or against that form of action the States of Europe are spending now such moments of uneasy leisure as they can snatch from the labours of factory and counting-house.

Never before has war received so much homage at the lips of men, and reigned with less disputed sway in their minds. It has harnessed science to its gun-carriages, it has enriched a few respectable manufacturers, scattered doles of food and raiment amongst a few thousand skilled workmen, devoured the first youth of whole generations, and reaped its harvest of countless corpses. It has perverted the intelligence of men, women, and children, and has made the speeches of Emperors, Kings, Presidents, and Ministers monotonous with ardent protestations of fidelity to peace. Indeed, war has made peace altogether its own, it has modelled it on its own image: a martial, overbearing, war-lord sort of peace, with a mailed fist, and turned-up moustaches, ringing with the din of grand manoeuvres, eloquent with allusions to glorious feats of arms; it has made peace so magnificent as to be almost as expensive to keep up as itself. It has sent out apostles of its own, who at one time went about (mostly in newspapers) preaching the gospel of the mystic sanctity of its sacrifices, and the regenerating power of spilt blood, to the poor in mind — whose name is legion.

It has been observed that in the course of earthly greatness a day of culminating triumph is often paid for by a morrow of sudden extinction. Let us hope it is so. Yet the dawn of that day of retribution may be a long time breaking above a dark horizon. War is with us now; and, whether this one ends soon or late, war will be with us again. And it is the way of true wisdom for men and States to take account of things as they are.

Civilisation has done its little best by our sensibilities for whose growth it is responsible. It has managed to remove the sights and sounds of battlefields away from our doorsteps. But it cannot be expected to achieve the feat always and under every variety of circumstance. Some day it must fail, and we shall have then a wealth of appallingly unpleasant sensations brought home to us with painful intimacy. It is not absurd to suppose that whatever war comes to us next it will not be a distant war waged by Russia either beyond the Amur or beyond the Oxus.

The Japanese armies have laid that ghost for ever, because the Russia of the future will not, for the reasons explained above, be the Russia of to-day. It will not have the same thoughts, resentments and aims. It is even a question whether it will preserve its gigantic frame unaltered and unbroken. All speculation loses itself in the magnitude of the events made possible by the defeat of an autocracy whose only shadow of a title to existence was the invincible power of military conquest. That autocratic Russia will have a miserable end in harmony with its base origin and inglorious life does not seem open to doubt. The problem of the immediate future is posed not by the eventual manner but by the approaching fact of its disappearance.

The Japanese armies, in laying the oppressive ghost, have not only accomplished what will be recognised historically as an important mission in the world's struggle against all forms of evil, but have also created a situation. They have created a situation in the East which they are competent to manage by themselves; and in doing this they have brought about a change in the condition of the West with which Europe is not well prepared to deal. The common ground of concord, good faith and justice is not sufficient to establish an action upon; since the conscience of but very few men amongst us, and of no single Western nation as yet, will brook the restraint of abstract ideas as against the fascination of a material advantage. And eagle-eyed wisdom alone cannot take the lead of human action, which in its nature must for ever remain short-sighted. The trouble of the civilised world is the want of a common conservative principle abstract enough to give the impulse, practical enough to form the rallying point of international action tending towards the restraint of particular ambitions. Peace tribunals instituted for the greater glory of war will not replace it. Whether such a principle exists — who can say? If it does not, then it ought to be invented. A sage with a sense of humour and a heart of compassion should set about it without loss of time, and a solemn prophet full of words and fire ought to be given the task of preparing the minds. So far there is no trace of such a principle anywhere in sight; even its plausible imitations (never very effective) have disappeared long ago before the doctrine of national aspirations. Il n'y a plus d'Europe — there is only an armed and trading continent, the home of slowly maturing economical contests for life and death and of loudly proclaimed world-wide ambitions. There are also other ambitions not so loud, but deeply rooted in the envious acquisitive temperament of the

last corner amongst the great Powers of the Continent, whose feet are not exactly in the ocean — not yet — and whose head is very high up — in Pomerania, the breeding place of such precious Grenadiers that Prince Bismarck (whom it is a pleasure to quote) would not have given the bones of one of them for the settlement of the old Eastern Question. But times have changed, since, by way of keeping up, I suppose, some old barbaric German rite, the faithful servant of the Hohenzollerns was buried alive to celebrate the accession of a new Emperor.

Already the voice of surmises has been heard hinting tentatively at a possible re-grouping of European Powers. The alliance of the three Empires is supposed possible. And it may be possible. The myth of Russia's power is dying very hard — hard enough for that combination to take place — such is the fascination that a discredited show of numbers will still exercise upon the imagination of a people trained to the worship of force. Germany may be willing to lend its support to a tottering autocracy for the sake of an undisputed first place, and of a preponderating voice in the settlement of every question in that south-east of Europe which merges into Asia. No principle being involved in such an alliance of mere expediency, it would never be allowed to stand in the way of Germany's other ambitions. The fall of autocracy would bring its restraint automatically to an end. Thus it may be believed that the support Russian despotism may get from its once humble friend and client will not be stamped by that thoroughness which is supposed to be the mark of German superiority. Russia weakened down to the second place, or Russia eclipsed altogether during the throes of her regeneration, will answer equally well the plans of German policy — which are many and various and often incredible, though the aim of them all is the same: aggrandisement of territory and influence, with no regard to right and justice, either in the East or in the West. For that and no other is the true note of your Welt-politik which desires to live.

The German eagle with a Prussian head looks all round the horizon, not so much for something to do that would count for good in the records of the earth, as simply for something good to get. He gazes upon the land and upon the sea with the same covetous steadiness, for he has become of late a maritime eagle, and has learned to box the compass. He gazes north and south, and east and west, and is inclined to look intemperately upon the waters of the Mediterranean when they are blue. The disappearance of the Russian phantom has given a foreboding of unwonted freedom to the Welt-politik. According to the national tendency this assumption of Imperial impulses would run into the grotesque were it not for the spikes of the pickelhaubes peeping out grimly from behind. Germany's attitude proves that no peace for the earth can be found in the expansion of material interests which she seems to have adopted exclusively as her only aim, ideal, and watchword. For the use of those who gaze half-unbelieving at the passing away of the Russian phantom, part Ghoul, part Djinn, part Old Man of the Sea, and wait half-doubting for the birth of a nation's soul in this age which knows no miracles, the once-famous saying of poor Gambetta, tribune of the people (who was simple and believed in the "immanent justice of things"), may be adapted in the shape of a warning that, so far as a future of liberty, concord, and justice is concerned: "Le Prussianisme — voilà l'ennemi!"

The Crime of Partition — 1919

At the end of the eighteenth century, when the partition of Poland had become an accomplished fact, the world qualified it at once as a crime. This strong condemnation proceeded, of course, from the West of Europe; the Powers of the Centre, Prussia and Austria, were not likely to admit that this spoliation fell into the category of acts morally reprehensible and carrying the taint of anti-social guilt. As to Russia, the third party to the crime, and the originator of the scheme, she had no national conscience at the time. The will of its rulers was always accepted by the people as the expression of an omnipotence derived directly from God. As an act of mere conquest the best excuse for the partition lay simply in the fact that it happened to be possible; there was the plunder and there was the opportunity to get hold of it. Catherine the Great looked upon this extension of her dominions with a cynical satisfaction. Her political argument that the destruction of Poland meant the repression of revolutionary ideas and the checking of the spread of Jacobinism in Europe was a characteristically impudent pretence. There may have been minds here and there amongst the Russians that perceived, or perhaps only felt, that by the annexation of the greater part of the Polish Republic, Russia approached nearer to the comity of civilised nations and ceased, at least territorially, to be an Asiatic Power.

It was only after the partition of Poland that Russia began to play a great part in Europe. To such statesmen as she had then that act of brigandage must have appeared inspired by great political wisdom. The King of Prussia, faithful to the ruling principle of his life, wished simply to aggrandise his dominions at a much smaller cost and at much less risk than he could have done in any other direction; for at that time Poland was perfectly defenceless from a material point of view, and more than ever, perhaps, inclined to put its faith in humanitarian illusions. Morally, the Republic was in a state of ferment and consequent weakness, which so often accompanies the period of social reform. The strength arrayed against her was just then overwhelming; I mean the comparatively honest (because open) strength of armed forces. But, probably from innate inclination towards treachery, Frederick of Prussia selected for himself the part of falsehood and deception. Appearing on the scene in the character of a friend he entered deliberately into a treaty of alliance with the Republic, and then, before the ink was dry, tore it up in brazen defiance of the commonest decency, which must have been extremely gratifying to his natural tastes.

As to Austria, it shed diplomatic tears over the transaction. They cannot be called crocodile tears, insomuch that they were in a measure sincere. They arose from a vivid perception that Austria's allotted share of the spoil could never compensate her for the accession of strength and territory to the other two Powers. Austria did not really want an extension of territory at the cost of Poland. She could not hope to improve her frontier in that way, and economically she had no need of Galicia, a province whose natural resources were undeveloped and whose salt mines did not arouse her cupidity because she had salt mines of her own. No doubt the democratic complexion of Polish institutions was very distasteful to the conservative monarchy; Austrian statesmen did see at the time that the real danger to the principle of autocracy was in the West, in France, and that all the forces of Central Europe would be needed for its suppression. But the movement towards a partage on the part of Russia and Prussia was too definite to be resisted, and Austria had to follow their lead in the destruction of a State which she would have preferred to preserve as a possible ally against Prussian and Russian ambitions. It may be truly said that the destruction of Poland secured the safety of the French Revolution. For when in 1795 the crime was consummated, the Revolution had turned the corner and was in a state to defend itself against the forces of reaction.

In the second half of the eighteenth century there were two centres of liberal ideas on the continent of Europe: France and Poland. On an impartial survey one may say without exaggeration that then France was relatively every bit as weak as Poland; even, perhaps, more so. But France's geographical position made her much less vulnerable. She had no powerful neighbours on her frontier; a decayed Spain in the south and a conglomeration of small German Principalities on the east were her happy lot. The only States which dreaded the contamination of the new principles and had enough power to combat it were Prussia, Austria, and Russia, and they had another centre of forbidden ideas to deal with in defenceless Poland, unprotected by nature, and offering an immediate satisfaction to their cupidity. They made their choice, and the untold sufferings of a nation which would not die was the price exacted by fate for the triumph of revolutionary ideals.

Thus even a crime may become a moral agent by the lapse of time and the course of history. Progress leaves its dead by the way, for progress is only a great adventure as its leaders and chiefs know very well in their hearts. It is a march into an undiscovered country; and in such an enterprise the victims do not count. As an emotional outlet for the oratory of freedom it was convenient enough to remember the Crime now and then: the Crime being the murder of a State and the carving of its body into three pieces. There was really nothing to do but to drop a few tears and a few flowers of rhetoric upon the grave. But the spirit of the nation refused to rest therein. It haunted the territories of the Old Republic in the manner of a ghost haunting its ancestral mansion where strangers are making themselves at home; a calumniated, ridiculed, and pooh-pooh'd ghost, and yet never ceasing to inspire a sort of awe, a strange uneasiness, in the hearts of the unlawful possessors. Poland deprived of its independence, of its historical continuity, with its religion and language persecuted and repressed, became a mere geographical expression. And even that, itself, seemed strangely vague, had lost its definite character, was rendered doubtful by the theories and the claims of the spoliators who, by a strange effect of uneasy conscience, while strenuously denying the moral guilt of the transaction, were always trying to throw a veil of high rectitude over the Crime. What was most annoying to their righteousness was the fact that the nation, stabbed to the heart, refused to grow insensible and cold. That persistent and almost uncanny vitality was sometimes very inconvenient to the rest of Europe also. It would intrude its irresistible claim into every problem of European politics, into the theory of European equilibrium, into the question of the Near East, the Italian question, the question of Schleswig-Holstein, and into the doctrine of nationalities. That ghost, not content with making its ancestral halls uncomfortable for the thieves, haunted also the Cabinets of Europe, waved indecently its bloodstained robes in the solemn atmosphere of Council-rooms, where congresses and conferences sit with closed windows. It would not be exorcised by the brutal jeers of Bismarck and the fine railleries of Gorchakov.

As a Polish friend observed to me some years ago: "Till the year '48 the Polish problem has been to a certain extent a convenient rallying-point for all manifestations of liberalism. Since that time we have come to be regarded simply as a nuisance. It's very disagreeable."

I agreed that it was, and he continued: "What are we to do? We did not create the situation by any outside action of ours. Through all the centuries of its existence Poland has never been a menace to anybody, not even to the Turks, to whom it has been merely an obstacle."

Nothing could be more true. The spirit of aggressiveness was absolutely foreign to the Polish temperament, to which the preservation of its institutions and its liberties was much more precious than any ideas of conquest. Polish wars were defensive, and they were mostly fought within Poland's own borders. And that those territories were often invaded was but a misfortune arising from its geographical position. Territorial expansion was never the master-thought of Polish statesmen. The consolidation of the territories of the sérénissime Republic, which made of it a Power of the first rank for a time, was not accomplished by force. It was not the consequence of successful aggression, but of a long and successful defence against the raiding neighbours from the East. The lands of Lithuanian and Ruthenian speech were never conquered by Poland. These peoples were not compelled by a series of exhausting wars to seek safety in annexation. It was not the will of a prince or a political intrigue that brought about the union. Neither was it fear. The slowly-matured view of the economical and social necessities and, before

all, the ripening moral sense of the masses were the motives that induced the forty three representatives of Lithuanian and Ruthenian provinces, led by their paramount prince, to enter into a political combination unique in the history of the world, a spontaneous and complete union of sovereign States choosing deliberately the way of peace. Never was strict truth better expressed in a political instrument than in the preamble of the first Union Treaty (1413). It begins with the words: "This Union, being the outcome not of hatred, but of love" — words that Poles have not heard addressed to them politically by any nation for the last hundred and fifty years.

This union being an organic, living thing capable of growth and development was, later, modified and confirmed by two other treaties, which guaranteed to all the parties in a just and eternal union all their rights, liberties, and respective institutions. The Polish State offers a singular instance of an extremely liberal administrative federalism which, in its Parliamentary life as well as its international politics, presented a complete unity of feeling and purpose. As an eminent French diplomatist remarked many years ago: "It is a very remarkable fact in the history of the Polish State, this invariable and unanimous consent of the populations; the more so that, the King being looked upon simply as the chief of the Republic, there was no monarchical bond, no dynastic fidelity to control and guide the sentiment of the nations, and their union remained as a pure affirmation of the national will." The Grand Duchy of Lithuania and its Ruthenian Provinces retained their statutes, their own administration, and their own political institutions. That those institutions in the course of time tended to assimilation with the Polish form was not the result of any pressure, but simply of the superior character of Polish civilisation.

Even after Poland lost its independence this alliance and this union remained firm in spirit and fidelity. All the national movements towards liberation were initiated in the name of the whole mass of people inhabiting the limits of the old Republic, and all the Provinces took part in them with complete devotion. It is only in the last generation that efforts have been made to create a tendency towards separation, which would indeed serve no one but Poland's common enemies. And, strangely enough, it is the internationalists, men who professedly care nothing for race or country, who have set themselves this task of disruption, one can easily see for what sinister purpose. The ways of the internationalists may be dark, but they are not inscrutable.

From the same source no doubt there will flow in the future a poisoned stream of hints of a reconstituted Poland being a danger to the races once so closely associated within the territories of the Old Republic. The old partners in "the Crime" are not likely to forgive their victim its inconvenient and almost shocking obstinacy in keeping alive. They had tried moral assassination before and with some small measure of success, for, indeed, the Polish question, like all living reproaches, had become a nuisance. Given the wrong, and the apparent impossibility of righting it without running risks of a serious nature, some moral alleviation may be found in the belief that the victim had brought its misfortunes on its own head by its own sins. That theory, too, had been advanced about Poland (as if other nations had known nothing of sin and folly), and it made some way in the world at different times, simply because good care was taken by the interested parties to stop the mouth of the accused. But it has never carried much conviction to honest minds. Somehow, in defiance of the cynical point of view as to the Force of Lies and against all the power of falsified evidence, truth often turns out to be stronger than calumny. With the course of years, however, another danger sprang up, a danger arising naturally from the new political alliances dividing Europe into two armed camps. It was the danger of silence. Almost without exception the Press of Western Europe in the twentieth century refused to touch the Polish question in any shape or form whatever. Never was the fact of Polish vitality more embarrassing to European diplomacy than on the eve of Poland's resurrection.

When the war broke out there was something gruesomely comic in the proclamations of emperors and archdukes appealing to that invincible soul of a nation whose existence or moral worth they had been so arrogantly denying for more than a century. Perhaps in the whole record of human transactions there have never been performances so brazen and so vile as the manifestoes of the German Emperor and the Grand Duke Nicholas of Russia; and, I imagine, no more bitter insult has been offered to human heart and intelligence than the way in which those proclamations were flung into the face of historical

truth. It was like a scene in a cynical and sinister farce, the absurdity of which became in some sort unfathomable by the reflection that nobody in the world could possibly be so abjectly stupid as to be deceived for a single moment. At that time, and for the first two months of the war, I happened to be in Poland, and I remember perfectly well that, when those precious documents came out, the confidence in the moral turpitude of mankind they implied did not even raise a scornful smile on the lips of men whose most sacred feelings and dignity they outraged. They did not deign to waste their contempt on them. In fact, the situation was too poignant and too involved for either hot scorn or a coldly rational discussion. For the Poles it was like being in a burning house of which all the issues were locked. There was nothing but sheer anguish under the strange, as if stony, calmness which in the utter absence of all hope falls on minds that are not constitutionally prone to despair. Yet in this time of dismay the irrepressible vitality of the nation would not accept a neutral attitude. I was told that even if there were no issue it was absolutely necessary for the Poles to affirm their national existence. Passivity, which could be regarded as a craven acceptance of all the material and moral horrors ready to fall upon the nation, was not to be thought of for a moment. Therefore, it was explained to me, the Poles must act. Whether this was a counsel of wisdom or not it is very difficult to say, but there are crises of the soul which are beyond the reach of wisdom. When there is apparently no issue visible to the eyes of reason, sentiment may yet find a way out, either towards salvation or to utter perdition, no one can tell — and the sentiment does not even ask the question. Being there as a stranger in that tense atmosphere, which was yet not unfamiliar to me, I was not very anxious to parade my wisdom, especially after it had been pointed out in answer to my cautious arguments that, if life has its values worth fighting for, death, too, has that in it which can make it worthy or unworthy.

Out of the mental and moral trouble into which the grouping of the Powers at the beginning of war had thrown the counsels of Poland there emerged at last the decision that the Polish Legions, a peace organisation in Galicia directed by Pilsudski (afterwards given the rank of General, and now apparently the Chief of the Government in Warsaw), should take the field against the Russians. In reality it did not matter against which partner in the "Crime" Polish resentment should be directed. There was little to choose between the methods of Russian barbarism, which were both crude and rotten, and the cultivated brutality tinged with contempt of Germany's superficial, grinding civilisation. There was nothing to choose between them. Both were hateful, and the direction of the Polish effort was naturally governed by Austria's tolerant attitude, which had connived for years at the semi-secret organisation of the Polish Legions. Besides, the material possibility pointed out the way. That Poland should have turned at first against the ally of Western Powers, to whose moral support she had been looking for so many years, is not a greater monstrosity than that alliance with Russia which had been entered into by England and France with rather less excuse and with a view to eventualities which could perhaps have been avoided by a firmer policy and by a greater resolution in the face of what plainly appeared unavoidable.

For let the truth be spoken. The action of Germany, however cruel, sanguinary, and faithless, was nothing in the nature of a stab in the dark. The Germanic Tribes had told the whole world in all possible tones carrying conviction, the gently persuasive, the coldly logical; in tones Hegelian, Nietzschean, warlike, pious, cynical, inspired, what they were going to do to the inferior races of the earth, so full of sin and all unworthiness. But with a strange similarity to the prophets of old (who were also great moralists and invokers of might) they seemed to be crying in a desert. Whatever might have been the secret searching of hearts, the Worthless Ones would not take heed. It must also be admitted that the conduct of the menaced Governments carried with it no suggestion of resistance. It was no doubt, the effect of neither courage nor fear, but of that prudence which causes the average man to stand very still in the presence of a savage dog. It was not a very politic attitude, and the more reprehensible in so far that it seemed to arise from the mistrust of their own people's fortitude. On simple matters of life and death a people is always better than its leaders, because a people cannot argue itself as a whole into a sophisticated state of mind out of deference for a mere doctrine or from an exaggerated sense of its own cleverness. I am speaking now of democracies whose chiefs resemble the tyrant of Syracuse in this,

that their power is unlimited (for who can limit the will of a voting people?) and who always see the domestic sword hanging by a hair above their heads.

Perhaps a different attitude would have checked German self-confidence, and her overgrown militarism would have died from the excess of its own strength. What would have been then the moral state of Europe it is difficult to say. Some other excess would probably have taken its place, excess of theory, or excess of sentiment, or an excess of the sense of security leading to some other form of catastrophe; but it is certain that in that case the Polish question would not have taken a concrete form for ages. Perhaps it would never have taken form! In this world, where everything is transient, even the most reproachful ghosts end by vanishing out of old mansions, out of men's consciences. Progress of enlightenment, or decay of faith? In the years before the war the Polish ghost was becoming so thin that it was impossible to get for it the slightest mention in the papers. A young Pole coming to me from Paris was extremely indignant, but I, indulging in that detachment which is the product of greater age, longer experience, and a habit of meditation, refused to share that sentiment. He had gone begging for a word on Poland to many influential people, and they had one and all told him that they were going to do no such thing. They were all men of ideas and therefore might have been called idealists, but the notion most strongly anchored in their minds was the folly of touching a question which certainly had no merit of actuality and would have had the appalling effect of provoking the wrath of their old enemies and at the same time offending the sensibilities of their new friends. It was an unanswerable argument. I couldn't share my young friend's surprise and indignation. My practice of reflection had also convinced me that there is nothing on earth that turns quicker on its pivot than political idealism when touched by the breath of practical politics.

It would be good to remember that Polish independence as embodied in a Polish State is not the gift of any kind of journalism, neither is it the outcome even of some particularly benevolent idea or of any clearly apprehended sense of guilt. I am speaking of what I know when I say that the original and only formative idea in Europe was the idea of delivering the fate of Poland into the hands of Russian Tsarism. And, let us remember, it was assumed then to be a victorious Tsarism at that. It was an idea talked of openly, entertained seriously, presented as a benevolence, with a curious blindness to its grotesque and ghastly character. It was the idea of delivering the victim with a kindly smile and the confident assurance that "it would be all right" to a perfectly unrepentant assassin, who, after sawing furiously at its throat for a hundred years or so, was expected to make friends suddenly and kiss it on both cheeks in the mystic Russian fashion. It was a singularly nightmarish combination of international polity, and no whisper of any other would have been officially tolerated. Indeed, I do not think in the whole extent of Western Europe there was anybody who had the slightest mind to whisper on that subject. Those were the days of the dark future, when Benckendorf put down his name on the Committee for the Relief of Polish Populations driven by the Russian armies into the heart of Russia, when the Grand Duke Nicholas (the gentleman who advocated a St. Bartholomew's Night for the suppression of Russian liberalism) was displaying his "divine" (I have read the very word in an English newspaper of standing) strategy in the great retreat, where Mr. Iswolsky carried himself haughtily on the banks of the Seine; and it was beginning to dawn upon certain people there that he was a greater nuisance even than the Polish question.

But there is no use in talking about all that. Some clever person has said that it is always the unexpected that happens, and on a calm and dispassionate survey the world does appear mainly to one as a scene of miracles. Out of Germany's strength, in whose purpose so many people refused to believe, came Poland's opportunity, in which nobody could have been expected to believe. Out of Russia's collapse emerged that forbidden thing, the Polish independence, not as a vengeful figure, the retributive shadow of the crime, but as something much more solid and more difficult to get rid of — a political necessity and a moral solution. Directly it appeared its practical usefulness became undeniable, and also the fact that, for better or worse, it was impossible to get rid of it again except by the unthinkable way of another carving, of another partition, of another crime.

Therein lie the strength and the future of the thing so strictly forbidden no farther back than two years or so, of the Polish independence expressed in a Polish State. It comes into the world morally free, not in virtue of its sufferings, but in virtue of its miraculous rebirth and of its ancient claim for services rendered to Europe. Not a single one of the combatants of all the fronts of the world has died consciously for Poland's freedom. That supreme opportunity was denied even to Poland's own children. And it is just as well! Providence in its inscrutable way had been merciful, for had it been otherwise the load of gratitude would have been too great, the sense of obligation too crushing, the joy of deliverance too fearful for mortals, common sinners with the rest of mankind before the eye of the Most High. Those who died East and West, leaving so much anguish and so much pride behind them, died neither for the creation of States, nor for empty words, nor yet for the salvation of general ideas. They died neither for democracy, nor leagues, nor systems, nor yet for abstract justice, which is an unfathomable mystery. They died for something too deep for words, too mighty for the common standards by which reason measures the advantages of life and death, too sacred for the vain discourses that come and go on the lips of dreamers, fanatics, humanitarians, and statesmen. They died . . . .

Poland's independence springs up from that great immolation, but Poland's loyalty to Europe will not be rooted in anything so trenchant and burdensome as the sense of an immeasurable indebtedness, of that gratitude which in a worldly sense is sometimes called eternal, but which lies always at the mercy of weariness and is fatally condemned by the instability of human sentiments to end in negation. Polish loyalty will be rooted in something much more solid and enduring, in something that could never be called eternal, but which is, in fact, life-enduring. It will be rooted in the national temperament, which is about the only thing on earth that can be trusted. Men may deteriorate, they may improve too, but they don't change. Misfortune is a hard school which may either mature or spoil a national character, but it may be reasonably advanced that the long course of adversity of the most cruel kind has not injured the fundamental characteristics of the Polish nation which has proved its vitality against the most demoralising odds. The various phases of the Polish sense of self-preservation struggling amongst the menacing forces and the no less threatening chaos of the neighbouring Powers should be judged impartially. I suggest impartiality and not indulgence simply because, when appraising the Polish question, it is not necessary to invoke the softer emotions. A little calm reflection on the past and the present is all that is necessary on the part of the Western world to judge the movements of a community whose ideals are the same, but whose situation is unique. This situation was brought vividly home to me in the course of an argument more than eighteen months ago. "Don't forget," I was told, "that Poland has got to live in contact with Germany and Russia to the end of time. Do you understand the force of that expression: 'To the end of time'? Facts must be taken into account, and especially appalling facts, such as this, to which there is no possible remedy on earth. For reasons which are, properly speaking, physiological, a prospect of friendship with Germans or Russians even in the most distant future is unthinkable. Any alliance of heart and mind would be a monstrous thing, and monsters, as we all know, cannot live. You can't base your conduct on a monstrous conception. We are either worth or not worth preserving, but the horrible psychology of the situation is enough to drive the national mind to distraction. Yet under a destructive pressure, of which Western Europe can have no notion, applied by forces that were not only crushing but corrupting, we have preserved our sanity. Therefore there can be no fear of our losing our minds simply because the pressure is removed. We have neither lost our heads nor yet our moral sense. Oppression, not merely political, but affecting social relations, family life, the deepest affections of human nature, and the very fount of natural emotions, has never made us vengeful. It is worthy of notice that with every incentive present in our emotional reactions we had no recourse to political assassination. Arms in hand, hopeless or hopefully, and always against immeasurable odds, we did affirm ourselves and the justice of our cause; but wild justice has never been a part of our conception of national manliness. In all the history of Polish oppression there was only one shot fired which was not in battle. Only one! And the man who fired it in Paris at the Emperor Alexander II. was but an individual connected with no organisation, representing no shade of Polish opinion. The only effect in Poland was that of profound regret, not at the failure, but at the mere fact

of the attempt. The history of our captivity is free from that stain; and whatever follies in the eyes of the world we may have perpetrated, we have neither murdered our enemies nor acted treacherously against them, nor yet have been reduced to the point of cursing each other."

I could not gainsay the truth of that discourse, I saw as clearly as my interlocutor the impossibility of the faintest sympathetic bond between Poland and her neighbours ever being formed in the future. The only course that remains to a reconstituted Poland is the elaboration, establishment, and preservation of the most correct method of political relations with neighbours to whom Poland's existence is bound to be a humiliation and an offence. Calmly considered it is an appalling task, yet one may put one's trust in that national temperament which is so completely free from aggressiveness and revenge. Therein lie the foundations of all hope. The success of renewed life for that nation whose fate is to remain in exile, ever isolated from the West, amongst hostile surroundings, depends on the sympathetic understanding of its problems by its distant friends, the Western Powers, which in their democratic development must recognise the moral and intellectual kinship of that distant outpost of their own type of civilisation, which was the only basis of Polish culture.

Whatever may be the future of Russia and the final organisation of Germany, the old hostility must remain unappeased, the fundamental antagonism must endure for years to come. The Crime of the Partition was committed by autocratic Governments which were the Governments of their time; but those Governments were characterised in the past, as they will be in the future, by their people's national traits, which remain utterly incompatible with the Polish mentality and Polish sentiment. Both the German submissiveness (idealistic as it may be) and the Russian lawlessness (fed on the corruption of all the virtues) are utterly foreign to the Polish nation, whose qualities and defects are altogether of another kind, tending to a certain exaggeration of individualism and, perhaps, to an extreme belief in the Governing Power of Free Assent: the one invariably vital principle in the internal government of the Old Republic. There was never a history more free from political bloodshed than the history of the Polish State, which never knew either feudal institutions or feudal quarrels. At the time when heads were falling on the scaffolds all over Europe there was only one political execution in Poland — only one; and as to that there still exists a tradition that the great Chancellor who democratised Polish institutions, and had to order it in pursuance of his political purpose, could not settle that matter with his conscience till the day of his death. Poland, too, had her civil wars, but this can hardly be made a matter of reproach to her by the rest of the world. Conducted with humanity, they left behind them no animosities and no sense of repression, and certainly no legacy of hatred. They were but a recognised argument in political discussion and tended always towards conciliation.

I cannot imagine, whatever form of democratic government Poland elaborates for itself, that either the nation or its leaders would do anything but welcome the closest scrutiny of their renewed political existence. The difficulty of the problem of that existence will be so great that some errors will be unavoidable, and one may be sure that they will be taken advantage of by its neighbours to discredit that living witness to a great historical crime. If not the actual frontiers, then the moral integrity of the new State is sure to be assailed before the eyes of Europe. Economical enmity will also come into play when the world's work is resumed again and competition asserts its power. Charges of aggression are certain to be made, especially as related to the small States formed of the territories of the Old Republic. And everybody knows the power of lies which go about clothed in coats of many colours, whereas, as is well known, Truth has no such advantage, and for that reason is often suppressed as not altogether proper for everyday purposes. It is not often recognised, because it is not always fit to be seen.

Already there are innuendoes, threats, hints thrown out, and even awful instances fabricated out of inadequate materials, but it is historically unthinkable that the Poland of the future, with its sacred tradition of freedom and its hereditary sense of respect for the rights of individuals and States, should seek its prosperity in aggressive action or in moral violence against that part of its once fellow-citizens who are Ruthenians or Lithuanians. The only influence that cannot be restrained is simply the influence of time, which disengages truth from all facts with a merciless logic and prevails over the passing opinions, the changing impulses of men. There can be no doubt that the moral impulses and the material interests

of the new nationalities, which seem to play now the game of disintegration for the benefit of the world's enemies, will in the end bring them nearer to the Poland of this war's creation, will unite them sooner or later by a spontaneous movement towards the State which had adopted and brought them up in the development of its own humane culture — the offspring of the West.

A Note on the Polish Problem — 1916

We must start from the assumption that promises made by proclamation at the beginning of this war may be binding on the individuals who made them under the stress of coming events, but cannot be regarded as binding the Governments after the end of the war.

Poland has been presented with three proclamations. Two of them were in such contrast with the avowed principles and the historic action for the last hundred years (since the Congress of Vienna) of the Powers concerned, that they were more like cynical insults to the nation's deepest feelings, its memory and its intelligence, than state papers of a conciliatory nature.

The German promises awoke nothing but indignant contempt; the Russian a bitter incredulity of the most complete kind. The Austrian proclamation, which made no promises and contented itself with pointing out the Austro-Polish relations for the last forty-five years, was received in silence. For it is a fact that in Austrian Poland alone Polish nationality was recognised as an element of the Empire, and individuals could breathe the air of freedom, of civil life, if not of political independence.

But for Poles to be Germanophile is unthinkable. To be Russophile or Austrophile is at best a counsel of despair in view of a European situation which, because of the grouping of the powers, seems to shut from them every hope, expressed or unexpressed, of a national future nursed through more than a hundred years of suffering and oppression.

Through most of these years, and especially since 1830, Poland (I use this expression since Poland exists as a spiritual entity to-day as definitely as it ever existed in her past) has put her faith in the Western Powers. Politically it may have been nothing more than a consoling illusion, and the nation had a half-consciousness of this. But what Poland was looking for from the Western Powers without discouragement and with unbroken confidence was moral support.

This is a fact of the sentimental order. But such facts have their positive value, for their idealism derives from perhaps the highest kind of reality. A sentiment asserts its claim by its force, persistence and universality. In Poland that sentimental attitude towards the Western Powers is universal. It extends to all classes. The very children are affected by it as soon as they begin to think.

The political value of such a sentiment consists in this, that it is based on profound resemblances. Therefore one can build on it as if it were a material fact. For the same reason it would be unsafe to disregard it if one proposed to build solidly. The Poles, whom superficial or ill-informed theorists are trying to force into the social and psychological formula of Slavonism, are in truth not Slavonic at all. In temperament, in feeling, in mind, and even in unreason, they are Western, with an absolute comprehension of all Western modes of thought, even of those which are remote from their historical experience.

That element of racial unity which may be called Polonism, remained compressed between Prussian Germanism on one side and the Russian Slavonism on the other. For Germanism it feels nothing but hatred. But between Polonism and Slavonism there is not so much hatred as a complete and ineradicable incompatibility.

No political work of reconstructing Poland either as a matter of justice or expediency could be sound which would leave the new creation in dependence to Germanism or to Slavonism.

The first need not be considered. The second must be — unless the Powers elect to drop the Polish question either under the cover of vague assurances or without any disguise whatever.

But if it is considered it will be seen at once that the Slavonic solution of the Polish Question can offer no guarantees of duration or hold the promise of security for the peace of Europe.

The only basis for it would be the Grand Duke's Manifesto. But that Manifesto, signed by a personage now removed from Europe to Asia, and by a man, moreover, who if true to himself, to his conception of patriotism and to his family tradition could not have put his hand to it with any sincerity of purpose, is now divested of all authority. The forcible vagueness of its promises, its startling inconsistency with the hundred years of ruthlessly denationalising oppression permit one to doubt whether it was ever meant to have any authority.

But in any case it could have had no effect. The very nature of things would have brought to nought its professed intentions.

It is impossible to suppose that a State of Russia's power and antecedents would tolerate a privileged community (of, to Russia, unnational complexion) within the body of the Empire. All history shows that such an arrangement, however hedged in by the most solemn treaties and declarations, cannot last. In this case it would lead to a tragic issue. The absorption of Polonism is unthinkable. The last hundred years of European History proves it undeniably. There remains then extirpation, a process of blood and iron; and the last act of the Polish drama would be played then before a Europe too weary to interfere, and to the applause of Germany.

It would not be just to say that the disappearance of Polonism would add any strength to the Slavonic power of expansion. It would add no strength, but it would remove a possibly effective barrier against the surprises the future of Europe may hold in store for the Western Powers.

Thus the question whether Polonism is worth saving presents itself as a problem of politics with a practical bearing on the stability of European peace — as a barrier or perhaps better (in view of its detached position) as an outpost of the Western Powers placed between the great might of Slavonism which has not yet made up its mind to anything, and the organised Germanism which has spoken its mind with no uncertain voice, before the world.

Looked at in that light alone Polonism seems worth saving. That it has lived so long on its trust in the moral support of the Western Powers may give it another and even stronger claim, based on a truth of a more profound kind. Polonism had resisted the utmost efforts of Germanism and Slavonism for more than a hundred years. Why? Because of the strength of its ideals conscious of their kinship with the West. Such a power of resistance creates a moral obligation which it would be unsafe to neglect. There is always a risk in throwing away a tool of proved temper.

In this profound conviction of the practical and ideal worth of Polonism one approaches the problem of its preservation with a very vivid sense of the practical difficulties derived from the grouping of the Powers. The uncertainty of the extent and of the actual form of victory for the Allies will increase the difficulty of formulating a plan of Polish regeneration at the present moment.

Poland, to strike its roots again into the soil of political Europe, will require a guarantee of security for the healthy development and for the untrammelled play of such institutions as she may be enabled to give to herself.

Those institutions will be animated by the spirit of Polonism, which, having been a factor in the history of Europe and having proved its vitality under oppression, has established its right to live. That spirit, despised and hated by Germany and incompatible with Slavonism because of moral differences, cannot avoid being (in its renewed assertion) an object of dislike and mistrust.

As an unavoidable consequence of the past Poland will have to begin its existence in an atmosphere of enmities and suspicions. That advanced outpost of Western civilisation will have to hold its ground in the midst of hostile camps: always its historical fate.

Against the menace of such a specially dangerous situation the paper and ink of public Treaties cannot be an effective defence. Nothing but the actual, living, active participation of the two Western Powers in the establishment of the new Polish commonwealth, and in the first twenty years of its existence, will give the Poles a sufficient guarantee of security in the work of restoring their national life.

An Anglo-French protectorate would be the ideal form of moral and material support. But Russia, as an ally, must take her place in it on such a footing as will allay to the fullest extent her possible apprehensions and satisfy her national sentiment. That necessity will have to be formally recognised.

In reality Russia has ceased to care much for her Polish possessions. Public recognition of a mistake in political morality and a voluntary surrender of territory in the cause of European concord, cannot damage the prestige of a powerful State. The new spheres of expansion in regions more easily assimilable, will more than compensate Russia for the loss of territory on the Western frontier of the Empire.

The experience of Dual Controls and similar combinations has been so unfortunate in the past that the suggestion of a Triple Protectorate may well appear at first sight monstrous even to unprejudiced minds. But it must be remembered that this is a unique case and a problem altogether exceptional, justifying the employment of exceptional means for its solution. To those who would doubt the possibility of even bringing such a scheme into existence the answer may be made that there are psychological moments when any measure tending towards the ends of concord and justice may be brought into being. And it seems that the end of the war would be the moment for bringing into being the political scheme advocated in this note.

Its success must depend on the singleness of purpose in the contracting Powers, and on the wisdom, the tact, the abilities, the good-will of men entrusted with its initiation and its further control. Finally it may be pointed out that this plan is the only one offering serious guarantees to all the parties occupying their respective positions within the scheme.

If her existence as a state is admitted as just, expedient and necessary, Poland has the moral right to receive her constitution not from the hand of an old enemy, but from the Western Powers alone, though of course with the fullest concurrence of Russia.

This constitution, elaborated by a committee of Poles nominated by the three Governments, will (after due discussion and amendment by the High Commissioners of the Protecting Powers) be presented to Poland as the initial document, the charter of her new life, freely offered and unreservedly accepted.

It should be as simple and short as a written constitution can be — establishing the Polish Commonwealth, settling the lines of representative institutions, the form of judicature, and leaving the greatest measure possible of self-government to the provinces forming part of the re-created Poland.

This constitution will be promulgated immediately after the three Powers had settled the frontiers of the new State, including the town of Danzic (free port) and a proportion of seaboard. The legislature will then be called together and a general treaty will regulate Poland's international portion as a protected state, the status of the High Commissioners and such-like matters. The legislature will ratify, thus making Poland, as it were, a party in the establishment of the protectorate. A point of importance.

Other general treaties will define Poland's position in the Anglo-Franco-Russian alliance, fix the numbers of the army, and settle the participation of the Powers in its organisation and training.

Poland Revisited — 1915

Chapter 1

I have never believed in political assassination as a means to an end, and least of all in assassination of the dynastic order. I don't know how far murder can ever approach the perfection of a fine art, but looked upon with the cold eye of reason it seems but a crude expedient of impatient hope or hurried despair. There are few men whose premature death could influence human affairs more than on the surface. The deeper stream of causes depends not on individuals who, like the mass of mankind, are carried on by a destiny which no murder has ever been able to placate, divert, or arrest.

In July of last year I was a stranger in a strange city in the Midlands and particularly out of touch with the world's politics. Never a very diligent reader of newspapers, there were at that time reasons of a private order which caused me to be even less informed than usual on public affairs as presented from day to day in that necessarily atmosphereless, perspectiveless manner of the daily papers, which somehow, for a man possessed of some historic sense, robs them of all real interest. I don't think I had looked at a daily for a month past.

But though a stranger in a strange city I was not lonely, thanks to a friend who had travelled there out of pure kindness to bear me company in a conjuncture which, in a most private sense, was somewhat trying.

It was this friend who, one morning at breakfast, informed me of the murder of the Archduke Ferdinand.

The impression was mediocre. I was barely aware that such a man existed. I remembered only that not long before he had visited London. The recollection was rather of a cloud of insignificant printed words his presence in this country provoked.

Various opinions had been expressed of him, but his importance was Archducal, dynastic, purely accidental. Can there be in the world of real men anything more shadowy than an Archduke? And now he was no more; removed with an atrocity of circumstances which made one more sensible of his humanity than when he was in life. I connected that crime with Balkanic plots and aspirations so little that I had actually to ask where it had happened. My friend told me it was in Serajevo, and wondered what would be the consequences of that grave event. He asked me what I thought would happen next.

It was with perfect sincerity that I answered "Nothing," and having a great repugnance to consider murder as a factor of politics, I dismissed the subject. It fitted with my ethical sense that an act cruel and absurd should be also useless. I had also the vision of a crowd of shadowy Archdukes in the background, out of which one would step forward to take the place of that dead man in the light of the European stage. And then, to speak the whole truth, there was no man capable of forming a judgment who attended so little to the march of events as I did at that time. What for want of a more definite term I must call my mind was fixed upon my own affairs, not because they were in a bad posture, but because of their fascinating holiday-promising aspect. I had been obtaining my information as to Europe at second hand, from friends good enough to come down now and then to see us. They arrived with their pockets full of crumpled newspapers, and answered my queries casually, with gentle smiles of scepticism as to the reality of my interest. And yet I was not indifferent; but the tension in the Balkans had become chronic after the acute crisis, and one could not help being less conscious of it. It had wearied out one's attention. Who could have guessed that on that wild stage we had just been looking at a miniature rehearsal of the great world-drama, the reduced model of the very passions and

violences of what the future held in store for the Powers of the Old World? Here and there, perhaps, rare minds had a suspicion of that possibility, while they watched Old Europe stage-managing fussily by means of notes and conferences, the prophetic reproduction of its awaiting fate. It was wonderfully exact in the spirit; same roar of guns, same protestations of superiority, same words in the air; race, liberation, justice — and the same mood of trivial demonstrations. One could not take to-day a ticket for Petersburg. "You mean Petrograd," would say the booking clerk. Shortly after the fall of Adrianople a friend of mine passing through Sophia asked for some café turc at the end of his lunch.

"Monsieur veut dire Café balkanique," the patriotic waiter corrected him austerely.

I will not say that I had not observed something of that instructive aspect of the war of the Balkans both in its first and in its second phase. But those with whom I touched upon that vision were pleased to see in it the evidence of my alarmist cynicism. As to alarm, I pointed out that fear is natural to man, and even salutary. It has done as much as courage for the preservation of races and institutions. But from a charge of cynicism I have always shrunk instinctively. It is like a charge of being blind in one eye, a moral disablement, a sort of disgraceful calamity that must he carried off with a jaunty bearing — a sort of thing I am not capable of. Rather than be thought a mere jaunty cripple I allowed myself to be blinded by the gross obviousness of the usual arguments. It was pointed out to me that these Eastern nations were not far removed from a savage state. Their economics were yet at the stage of scratching the earth and feeding the pigs. The highly-developed material civilisation of Europe could not allow itself to be disturbed by a war. The industry and the finance could not allow themselves to be disorganised by the ambitions of an idle class, or even the aspirations, whatever they might be, of the masses.

Very plausible all this sounded. War does not pay. There had been a book written on that theme — an attempt to put pacificism on a material basis. Nothing more solid in the way of argument could have been advanced on this trading and manufacturing globe. War was "bad business!" This was final.

But, truth to say, on this July day I reflected but little on the condition of the civilised world. Whatever sinister passions were heaving under its splendid and complex surface, I was too agitated by a simple and innocent desire of my own, to notice the signs or interpret them correctly. The most innocent of passions will take the edge off one's judgment. The desire which possessed me was simply the desire to travel. And that being so it would have taken something very plain in the way of symptoms to shake my simple trust in the stability of things on the Continent. My sentiment and not my reason was engaged there. My eyes were turned to the past, not to the future; the past that one cannot suspect and mistrust, the shadowy and unquestionable moral possession the darkest struggles of which wear a halo of glory and peace.

In the preceding month of May we had received an invitation to spend some weeks in Poland in a country house in the neighbourhood of Cracow, but within the Russian frontier. The enterprise at first seemed to me considerable. Since leaving the sea, to which I have been faithful for so many years, I have discovered that there is in my composition very little stuff from which travellers are made. I confess that my first impulse about a projected journey is to leave it alone. But the invitation received at first with a sort of dismay ended by rousing the dormant energy of my feelings. Cracow is the town where I spent with my father the last eighteen months of his life. It was in that old royal and academical city that I ceased to be a child, became a boy, had known the friendships, the admirations, the thoughts and the indignations of that age. It was within those historical walls that I began to understand things, form affections, lay up a store of memories and a fund of sensations with which I was to break violently by throwing myself into an unrelated existence. It was like the experience of another world. The wings of time made a great dusk over all this, and I feared at first that if I ventured bodily in there I would discover that I who have had to do with a good many imaginary lives have been embracing mere shadows in my youth. I feared. But fear in itself may become a fascination. Men have gone, alone and trembling, into graveyards at midnight — just to see what would happen. And this adventure was to be pursued in sunshine. Neither would it be pursued alone. The invitation was extended to us all. This journey would have something of a migratory character, the invasion of a tribe. My present, all that gave solidity and

value to it, at any rate, would stand by me in this test of the reality of my past. I was pleased with the idea of showing my companions what Polish country life was like; to visit the town where I was at school before the boys by my side should grow too old, and gaining an individual past of their own, should lose their unsophisticated interest in mine. It is only in the short instants of early youth that we have the faculty of coming out of ourselves to see dimly the visions and share the emotions of another soul. For youth all is reality in this world, and with justice, since it apprehends so vividly its images behind which a longer life makes one doubt whether there is any substance. I trusted to the fresh receptivity of these young beings in whom, unless Heredity is an empty word, there should have been a fibre which would answer to the sight, to the atmosphere, to the memories of that corner of the earth where my own boyhood had received its earliest independent impressions.

The first days of the third week in July, while the telegraph wires hummed with the words of enormous import which were to fill blue books, yellow books, white books, and to arouse the wonder of mankind, passed for us in light-hearted preparations for the journey. What was it but just a rush through Germany, to get across as quickly as possible?

Germany is the part of the earth's solid surface of which I know the least. In all my life I had been across it only twice. I may well say of it vidi tantum; and the very little I saw was through the window of a railway carriage at express speed. Those journeys of mine had been more like pilgrimages when one hurries on towards the goal for the satisfaction of a deeper need than curiosity. In this last instance, too, I was so incurious that I would have liked to have fallen asleep on the shores of England and opened my eyes, if it were possible, only on the other side of the Silesian frontier. Yet, in truth, as many others have done, I had "sensed it" — that promised land of steel, of chemical dyes, of method, of efficiency; that race planted in the middle of Europe, assuming in grotesque vanity the attitude of Europeans amongst effete Asiatics or barbarous niggers; and, with a consciousness of superiority freeing their hands from all moral bonds, anxious to take up, if I may express myself so, the "perfect man's burden." Meantime, in a clearing of the Teutonic forest, their sages were rearing a Tree of Cynical Wisdom, a sort of Upas tree, whose shade may be seen now lying over the prostrate body of Belgium. It must be said that they laboured openly enough, watering it with the most authentic sources of all madness, and watching with their be-spectacled eyes the slow ripening of the glorious blood-red fruit. The sincerest words of peace, words of menace, and I verily believe words of abasement, even if there had been a voice vile enough to utter them, would have been wasted on their ecstasy. For when the fruit ripens on a branch it must fall. There is nothing on earth that can prevent it.

Chapter 2

For reasons which at first seemed to me somewhat obscure, that one of my companions whose wishes are law decided that our travels should begin in an unusual way by the crossing of the North Sea. We should proceed from Harwich to Hamburg. Besides being thirty-six times longer than the Dover-Calais passage this rather unusual route had an air of adventure in better keeping with the romantic feeling of this Polish journey which for so many years had been before us in a state of a project full of colour and promise, but always retreating, elusive like an enticing mirage.

And, after all, it had turned out to be no mirage. No wonder they were excited. It's no mean experience to lay your hands on a mirage. The day of departure had come, the very hour had struck. The luggage was coming downstairs. It was most convincing. Poland then, if erased from the map, yet existed in reality; it was not a mere pays du rêve, where you can travel only in imagination. For no man, they argued, not even father, an habitual pursuer of dreams, would push the love of the novelist's art of make-believe to the point of burdening himself with real trunks for a voyage au pays du rêve.

As we left the door of our house, nestling in, perhaps, the most peaceful nook in Kent, the sky, after weeks of perfectly brazen serenity, veiled its blue depths and started to weep fine tears for the refreshment of the parched fields. A pearly blur settled over them, and a light sifted of all glare, of

everything unkindly and searching that dwells in the splendour of unveiled skies. All unconscious of going towards the very scenes of war, I carried off in my eye, this tiny fragment of Great Britain; a few fields, a wooded rise; a clump of trees or two, with a short stretch of road, and here and there a gleam of red wall and tiled roof above the darkening hedges wrapped up in soft mist and peace. And I felt that all this had a very strong hold on me as the embodiment of a beneficent and gentle spirit; that it was dear to me not as an inheritance, but as an acquisition, as a conquest in the sense in which a woman is conquered — by love, which is a sort of surrender.

These were strange, as if disproportionate thoughts to the matter in hand, which was the simplest sort of a Continental holiday. And I am certain that my companions, near as they are to me, felt no other trouble but the suppressed excitement of pleasurable anticipation. The forms and the spirit of the land before their eyes were their inheritance, not their conquest — which is a thing precarious, and, therefore, the most precious, possessing you if only by the fear of unworthiness rather than possessed by you. Moreover, as we sat together in the same railway carriage, they were looking forward to a voyage in space, whereas I felt more and more plainly, that what I had started on was a journey in time, into the past; a fearful enough prospect for the most consistent, but to him who had not known how to preserve against his impulses the order and continuity of his life — so that at times it presented itself to his conscience as a series of betrayals — still more dreadful.

I down here these thoughts so exclusively personal, to explain why there was no room in my consciousness for the apprehension of a European war. I don't mean to say that I ignored the possibility; I simply did not think of it. And it made no difference; for if I had thought of it, it could only have been in the lame and inconclusive way of the common uninitiated mortals; and I am sure that nothing short of intellectual certitude — obviously unattainable by the man in the street — could have stayed me on that journey which now that I had started on it seemed an irrevocable thing, a necessity of my self-respect.

London, the London before the war, flaunting its enormous glare, as of a monstrous conflagration up into the black sky — with its best Venice-like aspect of rainy evenings, the wet asphalted streets lying with the sheen of sleeping water in winding canals, and the great houses of the city towering all dark, like empty palaces, above the reflected lights of the glistening roadway.

Everything in the subdued incomplete night-life around the Mansion House went on normally with its fascinating air of a dead commercial city of sombre walls through which the inextinguishable activity of its millions streamed East and West in a brilliant flow of lighted vehicles.

In Liverpool Street, as usual too, through the double gates, a continuous line of taxi-cabs glided down the inclined approach and up again, like an endless chain of dredger-buckets, pouring in the passengers, and dipping them out of the great railway station under the inexorable pallid face of the clock telling off the diminishing minutes of peace. It was the hour of the boat-trains to Holland, to Hamburg, and there seemed to be no lack of people, fearless, reckless, or ignorant, who wanted to go to these places. The station was normally crowded, and if there was a great flutter of evening papers in the multitude of hands there were no signs of extraordinary emotion on that multitude of faces. There was nothing in them to distract me from the thought that it was singularly appropriate that I should start from this station on the retraced way of my existence. For this was the station at which, thirty-seven years before, I arrived on my first visit to London. Not the same building, but the same spot. At nineteen years of age, after a period of probation and training I had imposed upon myself as ordinary seaman on board a North Sea coaster, I had come up from Lowestoft — my first long railway journey in England — to "sign on" for an Antipodean voyage in a deep-water ship. Straight from a railway carriage I had walked into the great city with something of the feeling of a traveller penetrating into a vast and unexplored wilderness. No explorer could have been more lonely. I did not know a single soul of all these millions that all around me peopled the mysterious distances of the streets. I cannot say I was free from a little youthful awe, but at that age one's feelings are simple. I was elated. I was pursuing a clear aim, I was carrying out a deliberate plan of making out of myself, in the first place, a seaman worthy of the service, good enough to work by the side of the men with whom I was to live; and in the second place, I had to

justify my existence to myself, to redeem a tacit moral pledge. Both these aims were to be attained by the same effort. How simple seemed the problem of life then, on that hazy day of early September in the year 1878, when I entered London for the first time.

From that point of view — Youth and a straightforward scheme of conduct — it was certainly a year of grace. All the help I had to get in touch with the world I was invading was a piece of paper not much bigger than the palm of my hand — in which I held it — torn out of a larger plan of London for the greater facility of reference. It had been the object of careful study for some days past. The fact that I could take a conveyance at the station never occurred to my mind, no, not even when I got out into the street, and stood, taking my anxious bearings, in the midst, so to speak, of twenty thousand hansoms. A strange absence of mind or unconscious conviction that one cannot approach an important moment of one's life by means of a hired carriage? Yes, it would have been a preposterous proceeding. And indeed I was to make an Australian voyage and encircle the globe before ever entering a London hansom.

Another document, a cutting from a newspaper, containing the address of an obscure shipping agent, was in my pocket. And I needed not to take it out. That address was as if graven deep in my brain. I muttered its words to myself as I walked on, navigating the sea of London by the chart concealed in the palm of my hand; for I had vowed to myself not to inquire my way from anyone. Youth is the time of rash pledges. Had I taken a wrong turning I would have been lost; and if faithful to my pledge I might have remained lost for days, for weeks, have left perhaps my bones to be discovered bleaching in some blind alley of the Whitechapel district, as it had happened to lonely travellers lost in the bush. But I walked on to my destination without hesitation or mistake, showing there, for the first time, some of that faculty to absorb and make my own the imaged topography of a chart, which in later years was to help me in regions of intricate navigation to keep the ships entrusted to me off the ground. The place I was bound to was not easy to find. It was one of those courts hidden away from the charted and navigable streets, lost among the thick growth of houses like a dark pool in the depths of a forest, approached by an inconspicuous archway as if by secret path; a Dickensian nook of London, that wonder city, the growth of which bears no sign of intelligent design, but many traces of freakishly sombre phantasy the Great Master knew so well how to bring out by the magic of his understanding love. And the office I entered was Dickensian too. The dust of the Waterloo year lay on the panes and frames of its windows; early Georgian grime clung to its sombre wainscoting.

It was one o'clock in the afternoon, but the day was gloomy. By the light of a single gas-jet depending from the smoked ceiling I saw an elderly man, in a long coat of black broadcloth. He had a grey beard, a big nose, thick lips, and heavy shoulders. His curly white hair and the general character of his head recalled vaguely a burly apostle in the barocco style of Italian art. Standing up at a tall, shabby, slanting desk, his silver-rimmed spectacles pushed up high on his forehead, he was eating a mutton-chop, which had been just brought to him from some Dickensian eating-house round the corner.

Without ceasing to eat he turned to me his florid, barocco apostle's face with an expression of inquiry.

I produced elaborately a series of vocal sounds which must have borne sufficient resemblance to the phonetics of English speech, for his face broke into a smile of comprehension almost at once. — "Oh, it's you who wrote a letter to me the other day from Lowestoft about getting a ship."

I had written to him from Lowestoft. I can't remember a single word of that letter now. It was my very first composition in the English language. And he had understood it, evidently, for he spoke to the point at once, explaining that his business, mainly, was to find good ships for young gentlemen who wanted to go to sea as premium apprentices with a view of being trained for officers. But he gathered that this was not my object. I did not desire to be apprenticed. Was that the case?

It was. He was good enough to say then, "Of course I see that you are a gentleman. But your wish is to get a berth before the mast as an Able Seaman if possible. Is that it?"

It was certainly my wish; but he stated doubtfully that he feared he could not help me much in this. There was an Act of Parliament which made it penal to procure ships for sailors. "An Act-of-Parliament.

A law," he took pains to impress it again and again on my foreign understanding, while I looked at him in consternation.

I had not been half an hour in London before I had run my head against an Act of Parliament! What a hopeless adventure! However, the barocco apostle was a resourceful person in his way, and we managed to get round the hard letter of it without damage to its fine spirit. Yet, strictly speaking, it was not the conduct of a good citizen; and in retrospect there is an unfilial flavour about that early sin of mine. For this Act of Parliament, the Merchant Shipping Act of the Victorian era, had been in a manner of speaking a father and mother to me. For many years it had regulated and disciplined my life, prescribed my food and the amount of my breathing space, had looked after my health and tried as much as possible to secure my personal safety in a risky calling. It isn't such a bad thing to lead a life of hard toil and plain duty within the four corners of an honest Act of Parliament. And I am glad to say that its seventies have never been applied to me.

In the year 1878, the year of "Peace with Honour," I had walked as lone as any human being in the streets of London, out of Liverpool Street Station, to surrender myself to its care. And now, in the year of the war waged for honour and conscience more than for any other cause, I was there again, no longer alone, but a man of infinitely dear and close ties grown since that time, of work done, of words written, of friendships secured. It was like the closing of a thirty-six-year cycle.

All unaware of the War Angel already awaiting, with the trumpet at his lips, the stroke of the fatal hour, I sat there, thinking that this life of ours is neither long nor short, but that it can appear very wonderful, entertaining, and pathetic, with symbolic images and bizarre associations crowded into one half-hour of retrospective musing.

I felt, too, that this journey, so suddenly entered upon, was bound to take me away from daily life's actualities at every step. I felt it more than ever when presently we steamed out into the North Sea, on a dark night fitful with gusts of wind, and I lingered on deck, alone of all the tale of the ship's passengers. That sea was to me something unforgettable, something much more than a name. It had been for some time the schoolroom of my trade. On it, I may safely say, I had learned, too, my first words of English. A wild and stormy abode, sometimes, was that confined, shallow-water academy of seamanship from which I launched myself on the wide oceans. My teachers had been the sailors of the Norfolk shore; coast men, with steady eyes, mighty limbs, and gentle voice; men of very few words, which at least were never bare of meaning. Honest, strong, steady men, sobered by domestic ties, one and all, as far as I can remember.

That is what years ago the North Sea I could hear growling in the dark all round the ship had been for me. And I fancied that I must have been carrying its voice in my ear ever since, for nothing could be more familiar than those short, angry sounds I was listening to with a smile of affectionate recognition.

I could not guess that before many days my old schoolroom would be desecrated by violence, littered with wrecks, with death walking its waves, hiding under its waters. Perhaps while I am writing these words the children, or maybe the grandchildren, of my pacific teachers are out in trawlers, under the Naval flag, dredging for German submarine mines.

Chapter 3

I have said that the North Sea was my finishing school of seamanship before I launched myself on the wider oceans. Confined as it is in comparison with the vast stage of this water-girt globe, I did not know it in all its parts. My class-room was the region of the English East Coast which, in the year of Peace with Honour, had long forgotten the war episodes belonging to its maritime history. It was a peaceful coast, agricultural, industrial, the home of fishermen. At night the lights of its many towns played on the clouds, or in clear weather lay still, here and there, in brilliant pools above the ink-black outline of the land. On many a night I have hauled at the braces under the shadow of that coast, envying, as sailors will, the people on shore sleeping quietly in their beds within sound of the sea. I imagine that

not one head on those envied pillows was made uneasy by the slightest premonition of the realities of naval war the short lifetime of one generation was to bring so close to their homes.

Though far away from that region of kindly memories and traversing a part of the North Sea much less known to me, I was deeply conscious of the familiarity of my surroundings. It was a cloudy, nasty day: and the aspects of Nature don't change, unless in the course of thousands of years — or, perhaps, centuries. The Phoenicians, its first discoverers, the Romans, the first imperial rulers of that sea, had experienced days like this, so different in the wintry quality of the light, even on a July afternoon, from anything they had ever known in their native Mediterranean. For myself, a very late comer into that sea, and its former pupil, I accorded amused recognition to the characteristic aspect so well remembered from my days of training. The same old thing. A grey-green expanse of smudgy waters grinning angrily at one with white foam-ridges, and over all a cheerless, unglowing canopy, apparently made of wet blotting-paper. From time to time a flurry of fine rain blew along like a puff of smoke across the dots of distant fishing boats, very few, very scattered, and tossing restlessly on an ever dissolving, ever re-forming sky-line.

Those flurries, and the steady rolling of the ship, accounted for the emptiness of the decks, favouring my reminiscent mood. It might have been a day of five and thirty years ago, when there were on this and every other sea more sails and less smoke-stacks to be seen. Yet, thanks to the unchangeable sea I could have given myself up to the illusion of a revised past, had it not been for the periodical transit across my gaze of a German passenger. He was marching round and round the boat deck with characteristic determination. Two sturdy boys gambolled round him in his progress like two disorderly satellites round their parent planet. He was bringing them home, from their school in England, for their holiday. What could have induced such a sound Teuton to entrust his offspring to the unhealthy influences of that effete, corrupt, rotten and criminal country I cannot imagine. It could hardly have been from motives of economy. I did not speak to him. He trod the deck of that decadent British ship with a scornful foot while his breast (and to a large extent his stomach, too) appeared expanded by the consciousness of a superior destiny. Later I could observe the same truculent bearing, touched with the racial grotesqueness, in the men of the Landwehr corps, that passed through Cracow to reinforce the Austrian army in Eastern Galicia. Indeed, the haughty passenger might very well have been, most probably was, an officer of the Landwehr; and perhaps those two fine active boys are orphans by now. Thus things acquire significance by the lapse of time. A citizen, a father, a warrior, a mote in the dust-cloud of six million fighting particles, an unconsidered trifle for the jaws of war, his humanity was not consciously impressed on my mind at the time. Mainly, for me, he was a sharp tapping of heels round the corner of the deck-house, a white yachting cap and a green overcoat getting periodically between my eyes and the shifting cloud-horizon of the ashy-grey North Sea. He was but a shadowy intrusion and a disregarded one, for, far away there to the West, in the direction of the Dogger Bank, where fishermen go seeking their daily bread and sometimes find their graves, I could behold an experience of my own in the winter of '81, not of war, truly, but of a fairly lively contest with the elements which were very angry indeed.

There had been a troublesome week of it, including one hateful night — or a night of hate (it isn't for nothing that the North Sea is also called the German Ocean) — when all the fury stored in its heart seemed concentrated on one ship which could do no better than float on her side in an unnatural, disagreeable, precarious, and altogether intolerable manner. There were on board, besides myself, seventeen men all good and true, including a round enormous Dutchman who, in those hours between sunset and sunrise, managed to lose his blown-out appearance somehow, became as it were deflated, and thereafter for a good long time moved in our midst wrinkled and slack all over like a half-collapsed balloon. The whimpering of our deck-boy, a skinny, impressionable little scarecrow out of a training-ship, for whom, because of the tender immaturity of his nerves, this display of German Ocean frightfulness was too much (before the year was out he developed into a sufficiently cheeky young ruffian), his desolate whimpering, I say, heard between the gusts of that black, savage night, was much

more present to my mind and indeed to my senses than the green overcoat and the white cap of the German passenger circling the deck indefatigably, attended by his two gyrating children.

"That's a very nice gentleman." This information, together with the fact that he was a widower and a regular passenger twice a year by the ship, was communicated to me suddenly by our captain. At intervals through the day he would pop out of the chart-room and offer me short snatches of conversation. He owned a simple soul and a not very entertaining mind, and he was without malice and, I believe, quite unconsciously, a warm Germanophil. And no wonder! As he told me himself, he had been fifteen years on that run, and spent almost as much of his life in Hamburg as in Harwich.

"Wonderful people they are," he repeated from time to time, without entering into particulars, but with many nods of sagacious obstinacy. What he knew of them, I suppose, were a few commercial travellers and small merchants, most likely. But I had observed long before that German genius has a hypnotising power over half-baked souls and half-lighted minds. There is an immense force of suggestion in highly organised mediocrity. Had it not hypnotised half Europe? My man was very much under the spell of German excellence. On the other hand, his contempt for France was equally general and unbounded. I tried to advance some arguments against this position, but I only succeeded in making him hostile. "I believe you are a Frenchman yourself," he snarled at last, giving me an intensely suspicious look; and forthwith broke off communications with a man of such unsound sympathies.

Hour by hour the blotting-paper sky and the great flat greenish smudge of the sea had been taking on a darker tone, without any change in their colouring and texture. Evening was coming on over the North Sea. Black uninteresting hummocks of land appeared, dotting the duskiness of water and clouds in the Eastern board: tops of islands fringing the German shore. While I was looking at their antics amongst the waves — and for all their solidity they were very elusive things in the failing light — another passenger came out on deck. This one wore a dark overcoat and a grey cap. The yellow leather strap of his binocular case crossed his chest. His elderly red cheeks nourished but a very thin crop of short white hairs, and the end of his nose was so perfectly round that it determined the whole character of his physiognomy. Indeed nothing else in it had the slightest chance to assert itself. His disposition, unlike the widower's, appeared to be mild and humane. He offered me the loan of his glasses. He had a wife and some small children concealed in the depths of the ship, and he thought they were very well where they were. His eldest son was about the decks somewhere.

"We are Americans," he remarked weightily, but in a rather peculiar tone. He spoke English with the accent of our captain's "wonderful people," and proceeded to give me the history of the family's crossing the Atlantic in a White Star liner. They remained in England just the time necessary for a railway journey from Liverpool to Harwich. His people (those in the depths of the ship) were naturally a little tired.

At that moment a young man of about twenty, his son, rushed up to us from the fore-deck in a state of intense elation. "Hurrah," he cried under his breath. "The first German light! Hurrah!"

And those two American citizens shook hands on it with the greatest fervour, while I turned away and received full in the eyes the brilliant wink of the Borkum lighthouse squatting low down in the darkness. The shade of the night had settled on the North Sea.

I do not think I have ever seen before a night so full of lights. The great change of sea life since my time was brought home to me. I had been conscious all day of an interminable procession of steamers. They went on and on as if in chase of each other, the Baltic trade, the trade of Scandinavia, of Denmark, of Germany, pitching heavily into a head sea and bound for the gateway of Dover Straits. Singly, and in small companies of two and three, they emerged from the dull, colourless, sunless distances ahead as if the supply of rather roughly finished mechanical toys were inexhaustible in some mysterious cheap store away there, below the grey curve of the earth. Cargo steam vessels have reached by this time a height of utilitarian ugliness which, when one reflects that it is the product of human ingenuity, strikes hopeless awe into one. These dismal creations look still uglier at sea than in port, and with an added touch of the ridiculous. Their rolling waddle when seen at a certain angle, their abrupt clockwork nodding in a sea-way, so unlike the soaring lift and swing of a craft under sail, have in them something caricatural, a

suggestion of a low parody directed at noble predecessors by an improved generation of dull, mechanical toilers, conceited and without grace.

When they switched on (each of these unlovely cargo tanks carried tame lightning within its slab-sided body), when they switched on their lamps they spangled the night with the cheap, electric, shop-glitter, here, there, and everywhere, as of some High Street, broken up and washed out to sea. Later, Heligoland cut into the overhead darkness with its powerful beam, infinitely prolonged out of unfathomable night under the clouds.

I remained on deck until we stopped and a steam pilot-boat, so overlighted amidships that one could not make out her complete shape, glided across our bows and sent a pilot on board. I fear that the oar, as a working implement, will become presently as obsolete as the sail. The pilot boarded us in a motor-dinghy. More and more is mankind reducing its physical activities to pulling levers and twirling little wheels. Progress! Yet the older methods of meeting natural forces demanded intelligence too; an equally fine readiness of wits. And readiness of wits working in combination with the strength of muscles made a more complete man.

It was really a surprisingly small dinghy and it ran to and fro like a water-insect fussing noisily down there with immense self-importance. Within hail of us the hull of the Elbe lightship floated all dark and silent under its enormous round, service lantern; a faithful black shadow watching the broad estuary full of lights.

Such was my first view of the Elbe approached under the wings of peace ready for flight away from the luckless shores of Europe. Our visual impressions remain with us so persistently that I find it extremely difficult to hold fast to the rational belief that now everything is dark over there, that the Elbe lightship has been towed away from its post of duty, the triumphant beam of Heligoland extinguished, and the pilot-boat laid up, or turned to warlike uses for lack of its proper work to do. And obviously it must be so.

Any trickle of oversea trade that passes yet that way must be creeping along cautiously with the unlighted, war-blighted black coast close on one hand, and sudden death on the other. For all the space we steamed through that Sunday evening must now be one great minefield, sown thickly with the seeds of hate; while submarines steal out to sea, over the very spot perhaps where the insect-dinghy put a pilot on board of us with so much fussy importance. Mines; Submarines. The last word in sea-warfare! Progress — impressively disclosed by this war.

There have been other wars! Wars not inferior in the greatness of the stake and in the fierce animosity of feelings. During that one which was finished a hundred years ago it happened that while the English Fleet was keeping watch on Brest, an American, perhaps Fulton himself, offered to the Maritime Prefect of the port and to the French Admiral, an invention which would sink all the unsuspecting English ships one after another — or, at any rate most of them. The offer was not even taken into consideration; and the Prefect ends his report to the Minister in Paris with a fine phrase of indignation: "It is not the sort of death one would deal to brave men."

And behold, before history had time to hatch another war of the like proportions in the intensity of aroused passions and the greatness of issues, the dead flavour of archaism descended on the manly sentiment of those self-denying words. Mankind has been demoralised since by its own mastery of mechanical appliances. Its spirit is apparently so weak now, and its flesh has grown so strong, that it will face any deadly horror of destruction and cannot resist the temptation to use any stealthy, murderous contrivance. It has become the intoxicated slave of its own detestable ingenuity. It is true, too, that since the Napoleonic time another sort of war-doctrine has been inculcated in a nation, and held out to the world.

Chapter 4

On this journey of ours, which for me was essentially not a progress, but a retracing of footsteps on the road of life, I had no beacons to look for in Germany. I had never lingered in that land which, on the whole, is so singularly barren of memorable manifestations of generous sympathies and magnanimous impulses. An ineradicable, invincible, provincialism of envy and vanity clings to the forms of its thought like a frowsy garment. Even while yet very young I turned my eyes away from it instinctively as from a threatening phantom. I believe that children and dogs have, in their innocence, a special power of perception as far as spectral apparitions and coming misfortunes are concerned.

I let myself be carried through Germany as if it were pure space, without sights, without sounds. No whispers of the war reached my voluntary abstraction. And perhaps not so very voluntary after all! Each of us is a fascinating spectacle to himself, and I had to watch my own personality returning from another world, as it were, to revisit the glimpses of old moons. Considering the condition of humanity, I am, perhaps, not so much to blame for giving myself up to that occupation. We prize the sensation of our continuity, and we can only capture it in that way. By watching.

We arrived in Cracow late at night. After a scrambly supper, I said to my eldest boy, "I can't go to bed. I am going out for a look round. Coming?"

He was ready enough. For him, all this was part of the interesting adventure of the whole journey. We stepped out of the portal of the hotel into an empty street, very silent and bright with moonlight. I was, indeed, revisiting the glimpses of the moon. I felt so much like a ghost that the discovery that I could remember such material things as the right turn to take and the general direction of the street gave me a moment of wistful surprise.

The street, straight and narrow, ran into the great Market Square of the town, the centre of its affairs and of the lighter side of its life. We could see at the far end of the street a promising widening of space. At the corner an unassuming (but armed) policeman, wearing ceremoniously at midnight a pair of white gloves which made his big hands extremely noticeable, turned his head to look at the grizzled foreigner holding forth in a strange tongue to a youth on whose arm he leaned.

The Square, immense in its solitude, was full to the brim of moonlight. The garland of lights at the foot of the houses seemed to burn at the bottom of a bluish pool. I noticed with infinite satisfaction that the unnecessary trees the Municipality insisted upon sticking between the stones had been steadily refusing to grow. They were not a bit bigger than the poor victims I could remember. Also, the paving operations seemed to be exactly at the same point at which I left them forty years before. There were the dull, torn-up patches on that bright expanse, the piles of paving material looking ominously black, like heads of rocks on a silvery sea. Who was it that said that Time works wonders? What an exploded superstition! As far as these trees and these paving stones were concerned, it had worked nothing. The suspicion of the unchangeableness of things already vaguely suggested to my senses by our rapid drive from the railway station was agreeably strengthened within me.

"We are now on the line A.B.," I said to my companion, importantly.

It was the name bestowed in my time on one of the sides of the Square by the senior students of that town of classical learning and historical relics. The common citizens knew nothing of it, and, even if they had, would not have dreamed of taking it seriously. He who used it was of the initiated, belonged to the Schools. We youngsters regarded that name as a fine jest, the invention of a most excellent fancy. Even as I uttered it to my boy I experienced again that sense of my privileged initiation. And then, happening to look up at the wall, I saw in the light of the corner lamp, a white, cast-iron tablet fixed thereon, bearing an inscription in raised black letters, thus: "Line A.B." Heavens! The name had been adopted officially! Any town urchin, any guttersnipe, any herb-selling woman of the market-place, any wandering Boeotian, was free to talk of the line A.B., to walk on the line A.B., to appoint to meet his friends on the line A.B. It had become a mere name in a directory. I was stunned by the extreme mutability of things. Time could work wonders, and no mistake. A Municipality had stolen an invention of excellent fancy, and a fine jest had turned into a horrid piece of cast-iron.

I proposed that we should walk to the other end of the line, using the profaned name, not only without gusto, but with positive distaste. And this, too, was one of the wonders of Time, for a bare minute had worked that change. There was at the end of the line a certain street I wanted to look at, I explained to my companion.

To our right the unequal massive towers of St. Mary's Church soared aloft into the ethereal radiance of the air, very black on their shaded sides, glowing with a soft phosphorescent sheen on the others. In the distance the Florian Gate, thick and squat under its pointed roof, barred the street with the square shoulders of the old city wall. In the narrow, brilliantly pale vista of bluish flagstones and silvery fronts of houses, its black archway stood out small and very distinct.

There was not a soul in sight, and not even the echo of a footstep for our ears. Into this coldly illuminated and dumb emptiness there issued out of my aroused memory, a small boy of eleven, wending his way, not very fast, to a preparatory school for day-pupils on the second floor of the third house down from the Florian Gate. It was in the winter months of 1868. At eight o'clock of every morning that God made, sleet or shine, I walked up Florian Street. But of that, my first school, I remember very little. I believe that one of my co-sufferers there has become a much appreciated editor of historical documents. But I didn't suffer much from the various imperfections of my first school. I was rather indifferent to school troubles. I had a private gnawing worm of my own. This was the time of my father's last illness. Every evening at seven, turning my back on the Florian Gate, I walked all the way to a big old house in a quiet narrow street a good distance beyond the Great Square. There, in a large drawing-room, panelled and bare, with heavy cornices and a lofty ceiling, in a little oasis of light made by two candles in a desert of dusk, I sat at a little table to worry and ink myself all over till the task of my preparation was done. The table of my toil faced a tall white door, which was kept closed; now and then it would come ajar and a nun in a white coif would squeeze herself through the crack, glide across the room, and disappear. There were two of these noiseless nursing nuns. Their voices were seldom heard. For, indeed, what could they have had to say? When they did speak to me it was with their lips hardly moving, in a claustral, clear whisper. Our domestic matters were ordered by the elderly housekeeper of our neighbour on the second floor, a Canon of the Cathedral, lent for the emergency. She, too, spoke but seldom. She wore a black dress with a cross hanging by a chain on her ample bosom. And though when she spoke she moved her lips more than the nuns, she never let her voice rise above a peacefully murmuring note. The air around me was all piety, resignation, and silence.

I don't know what would have become of me if I had not been a reading boy. My prep. finished I would have had nothing to do but sit and watch the awful stillness of the sick room flow out through the closed door and coldly enfold my scared heart. I suppose that in a futile childish way I would have gone crazy. But I was a reading boy. There were many books about, lying on consoles, on tables, and even on the floor, for we had not had time to settle down. I read! What did I not read! Sometimes the elder nun, gliding up and casting a mistrustful look on the open pages, would lay her hand lightly on my head and suggest in a doubtful whisper, "Perhaps it is not very good for you to read these books." I would raise my eyes to her face mutely, and with a vague gesture of giving it up she would glide away.

Later in the evening, but not always, I would be permitted to tip-toe into the sick room to say good-night to the figure prone on the bed, which often could not acknowledge my presence but by a slow movement of the eyes, put my lips dutifully to the nerveless hand lying on the coverlet, and tip-toe out again. Then I would go to bed, in a room at the end of the corridor, and often, not always, cry myself into a good sound sleep.

I looked forward to what was coming with an incredulous terror. I turned my eyes from it sometimes with success, and yet all the time I had an awful sensation of the inevitable. I had also moments of revolt which stripped off me some of my simple trust in the government of the universe. But when the inevitable entered the sick room and the white door was thrown wide open, I don't think I found a single tear to shed. I have a suspicion that the Canon's housekeeper looked on me as the most callous little wretch on earth.

The day of the funeral came in due course and all the generous "Youth of the Schools," the grave Senate of the University, the delegations of the Trade-guilds, might have obtained (if they cared) de visu evidence of the callousness of the little wretch. There was nothing in my aching head but a few words, some such stupid sentences as, "It's done," or, "It's accomplished" (in Polish it is much shorter), or something of the sort, repeating itself endlessly. The long procession moved out of the narrow street, down a long street, past the Gothic front of St. Mary's under its unequal towers, towards the Florian Gate.

In the moonlight-flooded silence of the old town of glorious tombs and tragic memories, I could see again the small boy of that day following a hearse; a space kept clear in which I walked alone, conscious of an enormous following, the clumsy swaying of the tall black machine, the chanting of the surpliced clergy at the head, the flames of tapers passing under the low archway of the gate, the rows of bared heads on the pavements with fixed, serious eyes. Half the population had turned out on that fine May afternoon. They had not come to honour a great achievement, or even some splendid failure. The dead and they were victims alike of an unrelenting destiny which cut them off from every path of merit and glory. They had come only to render homage to the ardent fidelity of the man whose life had been a fearless confession in word and deed of a creed which the simplest heart in that crowd could feel and understand.

It seemed to me that if I remained longer there in that narrow street I should become the helpless prey of the Shadows I had called up. They were crowding upon me, enigmatic and insistent in their clinging air of the grave that tasted of dust and of the bitter vanity of old hopes.

"Let's go back to the hotel, my boy," I said. "It's getting late."

It will be easily understood that I neither thought nor dreamt that night of a possible war. For the next two days I went about amongst my fellow men, who welcomed me with the utmost consideration and friendliness, but unanimously derided my fears of a war. They would not believe in it. It was impossible. On the evening of the second day I was in the hotel's smoking room, an irrationally private apartment, a sanctuary for a few choice minds of the town, always pervaded by a dim religious light, and more hushed than any club reading-room I have ever been in. Gathered into a small knot, we were discussing the situation in subdued tones suitable to the genius of the place.

A gentleman with a fine head of white hair suddenly pointed an impatient finger in my direction and apostrophised me.

"What I want to know is whether, should there be war, England would come in."

The time to draw a breath, and I spoke out for the Cabinet without faltering.

"Most assuredly. I should think all Europe knows that by this time."

He took hold of the lapel of my coat, and, giving it a slight jerk for greater emphasis, said forcibly:

"Then, if England will, as you say, and all the world knows it, there can be no war. Germany won't be so mad as that."

On the morrow by noon we read of the German ultimatum. The day after came the declaration of war, and the Austrian mobilisation order. We were fairly caught. All that remained for me to do was to get my party out of the way of eventual shells. The best move which occurred to me was to snatch them up instantly into the mountains to a Polish health resort of great repute — which I did (at the rate of one hundred miles in eleven hours) by the last civilian train permitted to leave Cracow for the next three weeks.

And there we remained amongst the Poles from all parts of Poland, not officially interned, but simply unable to obtain the permission to travel by train, or road. It was a wonderful, a poignant two months. This is not the time, and, perhaps, not the place, to enlarge upon the tragic character of the situation; a whole people seeing the culmination of its misfortunes in a final catastrophe, unable to trust anyone, to appeal to anyone, to look for help from any quarter; deprived of all hope and even of its last illusions, and unable, in the trouble of minds and the unrest of consciences, to take refuge in stoical acceptance. I have seen all this. And I am glad I have not so many years left me to remember that appalling feeling

of inexorable fate, tangible, palpable, come after so many cruel years, a figure of dread, murmuring with iron lips the final words: Ruin — and Extinction.

But enough of this. For our little band there was the awful anguish of incertitude as to the real nature of events in the West. It is difficult to give an idea how ugly and dangerous things looked to us over there. Belgium knocked down and trampled out of existence, France giving in under repeated blows, a military collapse like that of 1870, and England involved in that disastrous alliance, her army sacrificed, her people in a panic! Polish papers, of course, had no other but German sources of information. Naturally, we did not believe all we read, but it was sometimes excessively difficult to react with sufficient firmness.

We used to shut our door, and there, away from everybody, we sat weighing the news, hunting up discrepancies, scenting lies, finding reasons for hopefulness, and generally cheering each other up. But it was a beastly time. People used to come to me with very serious news and ask, "What do you think of it?" And my invariable answer was: "Whatever has happened, or is going to happen, whoever wants to make peace, you may be certain that England will not make it, not for ten years, if necessary."

But enough of this, too. Through the unremitting efforts of Polish friends we obtained at last the permission to travel to Vienna. Once there, the wing of the American Eagle was extended over our uneasy heads. We cannot be sufficiently grateful to the American Ambassador (who, all along, interested himself in our fate) for his exertions on our behalf, his invaluable assistance and the real friendliness of his reception in Vienna. Owing to Mr. Penfield's action we obtained the permission to leave Austria. And it was a near thing, for his Excellency has informed my American publishers since that a week later orders were issued to have us detained till the end of the war. However, we effected our hair's-breadth escape into Italy; and, reaching Genoa, took passage in a Dutch mail steamer, homeward-bound from Java with London as a port of call.

On that sea-route I might have picked up a memory at every mile if the past had not been eclipsed by the tremendous actuality. We saw the signs of it in the emptiness of the Mediterranean, the aspect of Gibraltar, the misty glimpse in the Bay of Biscay of an outward-bound convoy of transports, in the presence of British submarines in the Channel. Innumerable drifters flying the Naval flag dotted the narrow waters, and two Naval officers coming on board off the South Foreland, piloted the ship through the Downs.

The Downs! There they were, thick with the memories of my sea-life. But what were to me now the futilities of an individual past? As our ship's head swung into the estuary of the Thames, a deep, yet faint, concussion passed through the air, a shock rather than a sound, which missing my ear found its way straight into my heart. Turning instinctively to look at my boys, I happened to meet my wife's eyes. She also had felt profoundly, coming from far away across the grey distances of the sea, the faint boom of the big guns at work on the coast of Flanders — shaping the future.

First News — 1918

Four years ago, on the first day of August, in the town of Cracow, Austrian Poland, nobody would believe that the war was coming. My apprehensions were met by the words: "We have had these scares before." This incredulity was so universal amongst people of intelligence and information, that even I, who had accustomed myself to look at the inevitable for years past, felt my conviction shaken. At that time, it must be noted, the Austrian army was already partly mobilised, and as we came through Austrian Silesia we had noticed all the bridges being guarded by soldiers.

"Austria will back down," was the opinion of all the well-informed men with whom I talked on the first of August. The session of the University was ended and the students were either all gone or going home to different parts of Poland, but the professors had not all departed yet on their respective holidays, and amongst them the tone of scepticism prevailed generally. Upon the whole there was very little inclination to talk about the possibility of a war. Nationally, the Poles felt that from their point of view there was nothing to hope from it. "Whatever happens," said a very distinguished man to me, "we may be certain that it's our skins which will pay for it as usual." A well-known literary critic and writer on economical subjects said to me: "War seems a material impossibility, precisely because it would mean the complete ruin of all material interests."

He was wrong, as we know; but those who said that Austria as usual would back down were, as a matter of fact perfectly right. Austria did back down. What these men did not foresee was the interference of Germany. And one cannot blame them very well; for who could guess that, when the balance stood even, the German sword would be thrown into the scale with nothing in the open political situation to justify that act, or rather that crime — if crime can ever be justified? For, as the same intelligent man said to me: "As it is, those people" (meaning Germans) "have very nearly the whole world in their economic grip. Their prestige is even greater than their actual strength. It can get for them practically everything they want. Then why risk it?" And there was no apparent answer to the question put in that way. I must also say that the Poles had no illusions about the strength of Russia. Those illusions were the monopoly of the Western world.

Next day the librarian of the University invited me to come and have a look at the library which I had not seen since I was fourteen years old. It was from him that I learned that the greater part of my father's MSS. was preserved there. He confessed that he had not looked them through thoroughly yet, but he told me that there was a lot of very important letters bearing on the epoch from '60 to '63, to and from many prominent Poles of that time: and he added: "There is a bundle of correspondence that will appeal to you personally. Those are letters written by your father to an intimate friend in whose papers they were found. They contain many references to yourself, though you couldn't have been more than four years old at the time. Your father seems to have been extremely interested in his son." That afternoon I went to the University, taking with me my eldest son. The attention of that young Englishman was mainly attracted by some relics of Copernicus in a glass case. I saw the bundle of letters and accepted the kind proposal of the librarian that he should have them copied for me during the holidays. In the range of the deserted vaulted rooms lined with books, full of august memories, and in the passionless silence of all this enshrined wisdom, we walked here and there talking of the past, the great historical past in which lived the inextinguishable spark of national life; and all around us the centuries-old buildings lay still and empty, composing themselves to rest after a year of work on the minds of another generation.

No echo of the German ultimatum to Russia penetrated that academical peace. But the news had come. When we stepped into the street out of the deserted main quadrangle, we three, I imagine, were

the only people in the town who did not know of it. My boy and I parted from the librarian (who hurried home to pack up for his holiday) and walked on to the hotel, where we found my wife actually in the car waiting for us to take a run of some ten miles to the country house of an old school-friend of mine. He had been my greatest chum. In my wanderings about the world I had heard that his later career both at school and at the University had been of extraordinary brilliance — in classics, I believe. But in this, the iron-grey moustache period of his life, he informed me with badly concealed pride that he had gained world fame as the Inventor — no, Inventor is not the word — Producer, I believe would be the right term — of a wonderful kind of beetroot seed. The beet grown from this seed contained more sugar to the square inch — or was it to the square root? — than any other kind of beet. He exported this seed, not only with profit (and even to the United States), but with a certain amount of glory which seemed to have gone slightly to his head. There is a fundamental strain of agriculturalist in a Pole which no amount of brilliance, even classical, can destroy. While we were having tea outside, looking down the lovely slope of the gardens at the view of the city in the distance, the possibilities of the war faded from our minds. Suddenly my friend's wife came to us with a telegram in her hand and said calmly: "General mobilisation, do you know?" We looked at her like men aroused from a dream. "Yes," she insisted, "they are already taking the horses out of the ploughs and carts." I said: "We had better go back to town as quick as we can," and my friend assented with a troubled look: "Yes, you had better." As we passed through villages on our way back we saw mobs of horses assembled on the commons with soldiers guarding them, and groups of villagers looking on silently at the officers with their note-books checking deliveries and writing out receipts. Some old peasant women were already weeping aloud.

When our car drew up at the door of the hotel, the manager himself came to help my wife out. In the first moment I did not quite recognise him. His luxuriant black locks were gone, his head was closely cropped, and as I glanced at it he smiled and said: "I shall sleep at the barracks to-night."

I cannot reproduce the atmosphere of that night, the first night after mobilisation. The shops and the gateways of the houses were of course closed, but all through the dark hours the town hummed with voices; the echoes of distant shouts entered the open windows of our bedroom. Groups of men talking noisily walked in the middle of the roadway escorted by distressed women: men of all callings and of all classes going to report themselves at the fortress. Now and then a military car tooting furiously would whisk through the streets empty of wheeled traffic, like an intensely black shadow under the great flood of electric lights on the grey pavement.

But what produced the greatest impression on my mind was a gathering at night in the coffee-room of my hotel of a few men of mark whom I was asked to join. It was about one o'clock in the morning. The shutters were up. For some reason or other the electric light was not switched on, and the big room was lit up only by a few tall candles, just enough for us to see each other's faces by. I saw in those faces the awful desolation of men whose country, torn in three, found itself engaged in the contest with no will of its own, and not even the power to assert itself at the cost of life. All the past was gone, and there was no future, whatever happened; no road which did not seem to lead to moral annihilation. I remember one of those men addressing me after a period of mournful silence compounded of mental exhaustion and unexpressed forebodings.

"What do you think England will do? If there is a ray of hope anywhere it is only there."

I said: "I believe I know what England will do" (this was before the news of the violation of Belgian neutrality arrived), "though I won't tell you, for I am not absolutely certain. But I can tell you what I am absolutely certain of. It is this: If England comes into the war, then, no matter who may want to make peace at the end of six months at the cost of right and justice, England will keep on fighting for years if necessary. You may reckon on that."

"What, even alone?" asked somebody across the room.

I said: "Yes, even alone. But if things go so far as that England will not be alone."

I think that at that moment I must have been inspired.

Well Done — 1918

Chapter 1

It can be safely said that for the last four years the seamen of Great Britain have done well. I mean that every kind and sort of human being classified as seaman, steward, foremast hand, fireman, lamp-trimmer, mate, master, engineer, and also all through the innumerable ratings of the Navy up to that of Admiral, has done well. I don't say marvellously well or miraculously well or wonderfully well or even very well, because these are simply over-statements of undisciplined minds. I don't deny that a man may be a marvellous being, but this is not likely to be discovered in his lifetime, and not always even after he is dead. Man's marvellousness is a hidden thing, because the secrets of his heart are not to be read by his fellows. As to a man's work, if it is done well it is the very utmost that can be said. You can do well, and you can do no more for people to see. In the Navy, where human values are thoroughly understood, the highest signal of commendation complimenting a ship (that is, a ship's company) on some achievements consists exactly of those two simple words "Well done," followed by the name of the ship. Not marvellously done, astonishingly done, wonderfully done — no, only just:

"Well done, so-and-so."

And to the men it is a matter of infinite pride that somebody should judge it proper to mention aloud, as it were, that they have done well. It is a memorable occurrence, for in the sea services you are expected professionally and as a matter of course to do well, because nothing less will do. And in sober speech no man can be expected to do more than well. The superlatives are mere signs of uninformed wonder. Thus the official signal which can express nothing but a delicate share of appreciation becomes a great honour.

Speaking now as a purely civil seaman (or, perhaps, I ought to say civilian, because politeness is not what I have in my mind) I may say that I have never expected the Merchant Service to do otherwise than well during the war. There were people who obviously did not feel the same confidence, nay, who even confidently expected to see the collapse of merchant seamen's courage. I must admit that such pronouncements did arrest my attention. In my time I have never been able to detect any faint hearts in the ships' companies with whom I have served in various capacities. But I reflected that I had left the sea in '94, twenty years before the outbreak of the war that was to apply its severe test to the quality of modern seamen. Perhaps they had deteriorated, I said unwillingly to myself. I remembered also the alarmist articles I had read about the great number of foreigners in the British Merchant Service, and I didn't know how far these lamentations were justified.

In my time the proportion of non-Britishers in the crews of the ships flying the red ensign was rather under one-third, which, as a matter of fact, was less than the proportion allowed under the very strict French navigation laws for the crews of the ships of that nation. For the strictest laws aiming at the preservation of national seamen had to recognise the difficulties of manning merchant ships all over the world. The one-third of the French law seemed to be the irreducible minimum. But the British proportion was even less. Thus it may be said that up to the date I have mentioned the crews of British merchant ships engaged in deep water voyages to Australia, to the East Indies and round the Horn were essentially British. The small proportion of foreigners which I remember were mostly Scandinavians, and my general impression remains that those men were good stuff. They appeared always able and ready to do their duty by the flag under which they served. The majority were Norwegians, whose courage and straightness of character are matters beyond doubt. I remember also a couple of Finns,

both carpenters, of course, and very good craftsmen; a Swede, the most scientific sailmaker I ever met; another Swede, a steward, who really might have been called a British seaman since he had sailed out of London for over thirty years, a rather superior person; one Italian, an everlastingly smiling but a pugnacious character; one Frenchman, a most excellent sailor, tireless and indomitable under very difficult circumstances; one Hollander, whose placid manner of looking at the ship going to pieces under our feet I shall never forget, and one young, colourless, muscularly very strong German, of no particular character. Of non-European crews, lascars and Kalashes, I have had very little experience, and that was only in one steamship and for something less than a year. It was on the same occasion that I had my only sight of Chinese firemen. Sight is the exact word. One didn't speak to them. One saw them going along the decks, to and fro, characteristic figures with rolled-up pigtails, very dirty when coming off duty and very clean-faced when going on duty. They never looked at anybody, and one never had occasion to address them directly. Their appearances in the light of day were very regular, and yet somewhat ghostlike in their detachment and silence.

But of the white crews of British ships and almost exclusively British in blood and descent, the immediate predecessors of the men whose worth the nation has discovered for itself to-day, I have had a thorough experience. At first amongst them, then with them, I have shared all the conditions of their very special life. For it was very special. In my early days, starting out on a voyage was like being launched into Eternity. I say advisedly Eternity instead of Space, because of the boundless silence which swallowed up one for eighty days — for one hundred days — for even yet more days of an existence without echoes and whispers. Like Eternity itself! For one can't conceive a vocal Eternity. An enormous silence, in which there was nothing to connect one with the Universe but the incessant wheeling about of the sun and other celestial bodies, the alternation of light and shadow, eternally chasing each other over the sky. The time of the earth, though most carefully recorded by the half-hourly bells, did not count in reality.

It was a special life, and the men were a very special kind of men. By this I don't mean to say they were more complex than the generality of mankind. Neither were they very much simpler. I have already admitted that man is a marvellous creature, and no doubt those particular men were marvellous enough in their way. But in their collective capacity they can be best defined as men who lived under the command to do well, or perish utterly. I have written of them with all the truth that was in me, and with an the impartiality of which I was capable. Let me not be misunderstood in this statement. Affection can be very exacting, and can easily miss fairness on the critical side. I have looked upon them with a jealous eye, expecting perhaps even more than it was strictly fair to expect. And no wonder — since I had elected to be one of them very deliberately, very completely, without any looking back or looking elsewhere. The circumstances were such as to give me the feeling of complete identification, a very vivid comprehension that if I wasn't one of them I was nothing at all. But what was most difficult to detect was the nature of the deep impulses which these men obeyed. What spirit was it that inspired the unfailing manifestations of their simple fidelity? No outward cohesive force of compulsion or discipline was holding them together or had ever shaped their unexpressed standards. It was very mysterious. At last I came to the conclusion that it must be something in the nature of the life itself; the sea-life chosen blindly, embraced for the most part accidentally by those men who appeared but a loose agglomeration of individuals toiling for their living away from the eyes of mankind. Who can tell how a tradition comes into the world? We are children of the earth. It may be that the noblest tradition is but the offspring of material conditions, of the hard necessities besetting men's precarious lives. But once it has been born it becomes a spirit. Nothing can extinguish its force then. Clouds of greedy selfishness, the subtle dialectics of revolt or fear, may obscure it for a time, but in very truth it remains an immortal ruler invested with the power of honour and shame.

Chapter 2

The mysteriously born tradition of sea-craft commands unity in a body of workers engaged in an occupation in which men have to depend upon each other. It raises them, so to speak, above the frailties of their dead selves. I don't wish to be suspected of lack of judgment and of blind enthusiasm. I don't claim special morality or even special manliness for the men who in my time really lived at sea, and at the present time live at any rate mostly at sea. But in their qualities as well as in their defects, in their weaknesses as well as in their "virtue," there was indubitably something apart. They were never exactly of the earth earthly. They couldn't be that. Chance or desire (mostly desire) had set them apart, often in their very childhood; and what is to be remarked is that from the very nature of things this early appeal, this early desire, had to be of an imaginative kind. Thus their simple minds had a sort of sweetness. They were in a way preserved. I am not alluding here to the preserving qualities of the salt in the sea. The salt of the sea is a very good thing in its way; it preserves for instance one from catching a beastly cold while one remains wet for weeks together in the "roaring forties." But in sober unpoetical truth the sea-salt never gets much further than the seaman's skin, which in certain latitudes it takes the opportunity to encrust very thoroughly. That and nothing more. And then, what is this sea, the subject of so many apostrophes in verse and prose addressed to its greatness and its mystery by men who had never penetrated either the one or the other? The sea is uncertain, arbitrary, featureless, and violent. Except when helped by the varied majesty of the sky, there is something inane in its serenity and something stupid in its wrath, which is endless, boundless, persistent, and futile — a grey, hoary thing raging like an old ogre uncertain of its prey. Its very immensity is wearisome. At any time within the navigating centuries mankind might have addressed it with the words: "What are you, after all? Oh, yes, we know. The greatest scene of potential terror, a devouring enigma of space. Yes. But our lives have been nothing if not a continuous defiance of what you can do and what you may hold; a spiritual and material defiance carried on in our plucky cockleshells on and on beyond the successive provocations of your unreadable horizons."

Ah, but the charm of the sea! Oh, yes, charm enough. Or rather a sort of unholy fascination as of an elusive nymph whose embrace is death, and a Medusa's head whose stare is terror. That sort of charm is calculated to keep men morally in order. But as to sea-salt, with its particular bitterness like nothing else on earth, that, I am safe to say, penetrates no further than the seamen's lips. With them the inner soundness is caused by another kind of preservative of which (nobody will be surprised to hear) the main ingredient is a certain kind of love that has nothing to do with the futile smiles and the futile passions of the sea.

Being love this feeling is naturally naive and imaginative. It has also in it that strain of fantasy that is so often, nay almost invariably, to be found in the temperament of a true seaman. But I repeat that I claim no particular morality for seamen. I will admit without difficulty that I have found amongst them the usual defects of mankind, characters not quite straight, uncertain tempers, vacillating wills, capriciousness, small meannesses; all this coming out mostly on the contact with the shore; and all rather naive, peculiar, a little fantastic. I have even had a downright thief in my experience. One.

This is indeed a minute proportion, but it might have been my luck; and since I am writing in eulogy of seamen I feel irresistibly tempted to talk about this unique specimen; not indeed to offer him as an example of morality, but to bring out certain characteristics and set out a certain point of view. He was a large, strong man with a guileless countenance, not very communicative with his shipmates, but when drawn into any sort of conversation displaying a very painstaking earnestness. He was fair and candid-eyed, of a very satisfactory smartness, and, from the officer-of-the-watch point of view, — altogether dependable. Then, suddenly, he went and stole. And he didn't go away from his honourable kind to do that thing to somebody on shore; he stole right there on the spot, in proximity to his shipmates, on board his own ship, with complete disregard for old Brown, our night watchman (whose fame for trustworthiness was utterly blasted for the rest of the voyage) and in such a way as to bring the profoundest possible trouble to all the blameless souls animating that ship. He stole eleven

golden sovereigns, and a gold pocket chronometer and chain. I am really in doubt whether the crime should not be entered under the category of sacrilege rather than theft. Those things belonged to the captain! There was certainly something in the nature of the violation of a sanctuary, and of a particularly impudent kind, too, because he got his plunder out of the captain's state-room while the captain was asleep there. But look, now, at the fantasy of the man! After going through the pockets of the clothes, he did not hasten to retreat. No. He went deliberately into the saloon and removed from the sideboard two big heavy, silver-plated lamps, which he carried to the fore-end of the ship and stood symmetrically on the knight-heads. This, I must explain, means that he took them away as far as possible from the place where they belonged. These were the deeds of darkness. In the morning the bo'sun came along dragging after him a hose to wash the foc'sle head, and, beholding the shiny cabin lamps, resplendent in the morning light, one on each side of the bowsprit, he was paralysed with awe. He dropped the nozzle from his nerveless hands — and such hands, too! I happened along, and he said to me in a distracted whisper: "Look at that, sir, look." "Take them back aft at once yourself," I said, very amazed, too. As we approached the quarterdeck we perceived the steward, a prey to a sort of sacred horror, holding up before us the captain's trousers.

Bronzed men with brooms and buckets in their hands stood about with open mouths. "I have found them lying in the passage outside the captain's door," the steward declared faintly. The additional statement that the captain's watch was gone from its hook by the bedside raised the painful sensation to the highest pitch. We knew then we had a thief amongst us. Our thief! Behold the solidarity of a ship's company. He couldn't be to us like any other thief. We all had to live under the shadow of his crime for days; but the police kept on investigating, and one morning a young woman appeared on board swinging a parasol, attended by two policemen, and identified the culprit. She was a barmaid of some bar near the Circular Quay, and knew really nothing of our man except that he looked like a respectable sailor. She had seen him only twice in her life. On the second occasion he begged her nicely as a great favour to take care for him of a small solidly tied-up paper parcel for a day or two. But he never came near her again. At the end of three weeks she opened it, and, of course, seeing the contents, was much alarmed, and went to the nearest police-station for advice. The police took her at once on board our ship, where all hands were mustered on the quarterdeck. She stared wildly at all our faces, pointed suddenly a finger with a shriek, "That's the man," and incontinently went off into a fit of hysterics in front of thirty-six seamen. I must say that never in my life did I see a ship's company look so frightened. Yes, in this tale of guilt, there was a curious absence of mere criminality, and a touch of that fantasy which is often a part of a seaman's character. It wasn't greed that moved him, I think. It was something much less simple: boredom, perhaps, or a bet, or the pleasure of defiance.

And now for the point of view. It was given to me by a short, black-bearded A.B. of the crew, who on sea passages washed my flannel shirts, mended my clothes and, generally, looked after my room. He was an excellent needleman and washerman, and a very good sailor. Standing in this peculiar relation to me, he considered himself privileged to open his mind on the matter one evening when he brought back to my cabin three clean and neatly folded shirts. He was profoundly pained. He said: "What a ship's company! Never seen such a crowd! Liars, cheats, thieves. . . "

It was a needlessly jaundiced view. There were in that ship's company three or four fellows who dealt in tall yarns, and I knew that on the passage out there had been a dispute over a game in the foc'sle once or twice of a rather acute kind, so that all card-playing had to be abandoned. In regard to thieves, as we know, there was only one, and he, I am convinced, came out of his reserve to perform an exploit rather than to commit a crime. But my black-bearded friend's indignation had its special morality, for he added, with a burst of passion: "And on board our ship, too — a ship like this. . ."

Therein lies the secret of the seamen's special character as a body. The ship, this ship, our ship, the ship we serve, is the moral symbol of our life. A ship has to be respected, actually and ideally; her merit, her innocence, are sacred things. Of all the creations of man she is the closest partner of his toil and courage. From every point of view it is imperative that you should do well by her. And, as always in the case of true love, all you can do for her adds only to the tale of her merits in your heart. Mute and

compelling, she claims not only your fidelity, but your respect. And the supreme "Well done!" which you may earn is made over to her.

Chapter 3

It is my deep conviction, or, perhaps, I ought to say my deep feeling born from personal experience, that it is not the sea but the ships of the sea that guide and command that spirit of adventure which some say is the second nature of British men. I don't want to provoke a controversy (for intellectually I am rather a Quietist) but I venture to affirm that the main characteristic of the British men spread all over the world, is not the spirit of adventure so much as the spirit of service. I think that this could be demonstrated from the history of great voyages and the general activity of the race. That the British man has always liked his service to be adventurous rather than otherwise cannot be denied, for each British man began by being young in his time when all risk has a glamour. Afterwards, with the course of years, risk became a part of his daily work; he would have missed it from his side as one misses a loved companion.

The mere love of adventure is no saving grace. It is no grace at all. It lays a man under no obligation of faithfulness to an idea and even to his own self. Roughly speaking, an adventurer may be expected to have courage, or at any rate may be said to need it. But courage in itself is not an ideal. A successful highwayman showed courage of a sort, and pirate crews have been known to fight with courage or perhaps only with reckless desperation in the manner of cornered rats. There is nothing in the world to prevent a mere lover or pursuer of adventure from running at any moment. There is his own self, his mere taste for excitement, the prospect of some sort of gain, but there is no sort of loyalty to bind him in honour to consistent conduct. I have noticed that the majority of mere lovers of adventure are mightily careful of their skins; and the proof of it is that so many of them manage to keep it whole to an advanced age. You find them in mysterious nooks of islands and continents, mostly red-nosed and watery-eyed, and not even amusingly boastful. There is nothing more futile under the sun than a mere adventurer. He might have loved at one time — which would have been a saving grace. I mean loved adventure for itself. But if so, he was bound to lose this grace very soon. Adventure by itself is but a phantom, a dubious shape without a heart. Yes, there is nothing more futile than an adventurer; but nobody can say that the adventurous activities of the British race are stamped with the futility of a chase after mere emotions.

The successive generations that went out to sea from these Isles went out to toil desperately in adventurous conditions. A man is a worker. If he is not that he is nothing. Just nothing — like a mere adventurer. Those men understood the nature of their work, but more or less dimly, in various degrees of imperfection. The best and greatest of their leaders even had never seen it clearly, because of its magnitude and the remoteness of its end. This is the common fate of mankind, whose most positive achievements are born from dreams and visions followed loyally to an unknown destination. And it doesn't matter. For the great mass of mankind the only saving grace that is needed is steady fidelity to what is nearest to hand and heart in the short moment of each human effort. In other and in greater words, what is needed is a sense of immediate duty, and a feeling of impalpable constraint. Indeed, seamen and duty are all the time inseparable companions. It has been suggested to me that this sense of duty is not a patriotic sense or a religious sense, or even a social sense in a seaman. I don't know. It seems to me that a seaman's duty may be an unconscious compound of these three, something perhaps smaller than either, but something much more definite for the simple mind and more adapted to the humbleness of the seaman's task. It has been suggested also to me that the impalpable constraint is put upon the nature of a seaman by the Spirit of the Sea, which he serves with a dumb and dogged devotion.

Those are fine words conveying a fine idea. But this I do know, that it is very difficult to display a dogged devotion to a mere spirit, however great. In everyday life ordinary men require something much

more material, effective, definite and symbolic on which to concentrate their love and their devotion. And then, what is it, this Spirit of the Sea? It is too great and too elusive to be embraced and taken to a human breast. All that a guileless or guileful seaman knows of it is its hostility, its exaction of toil as endless as its ever-renewed horizons. No. What awakens the seaman's sense of duty, what lays that impalpable constraint upon the strength of his manliness, what commands his not always dumb if always dogged devotion, is not the spirit of the sea but something that in his eyes has a body, a character, a fascination, and almost a soul — it is his ship.

There is not a day that has passed for many centuries now without the sun seeing scattered over all the seas groups of British men whose material and moral existence is conditioned by their loyalty to each other and their faithful devotion to a ship.

Each age has sent its contingent, not of sons (for the great mass of seamen have always been a childless lot) but of loyal and obscure successors taking up the modest but spiritual inheritance of a hard life and simple duties; of duties so simple that nothing ever could shake the traditional attitude born from the physical conditions of the service. It was always the ship, bound on any possible errand in the service of the nation, that has been the stage for the exercise of seamen's primitive virtues. The dimness of great distances and the obscurity of lives protected them from the nation's admiring gaze. Those scattered distant ships' companies seemed to the eyes of the earth only one degree removed (on the right side, I suppose) from the other strange monsters of the deep. If spoken of at all they were spoken of in tones of half-contemptuous indulgence. A good many years ago it was my lot to write about one of those ships' companies on a certain sea, under certain circumstances, in a book of no particular length.

That small group of men whom I tried to limn with loving care, but sparing none of their weaknesses, was characterised by a friendly reviewer as a lot of engaging ruffians. This gave me some food for thought. Was it, then, in that guise that they appeared through the mists of the sea, distant, perplexed, and simple-minded? And what on earth is an "engaging ruffian"? He must be a creature of literary imagination, I thought, for the two words don't match in my personal experience. It has happened to me to meet a few ruffians here and there, but I never found one of them "engaging." I consoled myself, however, by the reflection that the friendly reviewer must have been talking like a parrot, which so often seems to understand what it says.

Yes, in the mists of the sea, and in their remoteness from the rest of the race, the shapes of those men appeared distorted, uncouth and faint — so faint as to be almost invisible. It needed the lurid light of the engines of war to bring them out into full view, very simple, without worldly graces, organised now into a body of workers by the genius of one of themselves, who gave them a place and a voice in the social scheme; but in the main still apart in their homeless, childless generations, scattered in loyal groups over all the seas, giving faithful care to their ships and serving the nation, which, since they are seamen, can give them no reward but the supreme "Well Done."

Tradition — 1918

"Work is the law. Like iron that lying idle degenerates into a mass of useless rust, like water that in an unruffled pool sickens into a stagnant and corrupt state, so without action the spirit of men turns to a dead thing, loses its force, ceases prompting us to leave some trace of ourselves on this earth." The sense of the above lines does not belong to me. It may be found in the note-books of one of the greatest artists that ever lived, Leonardo da Vinci. It has a simplicity and a truth which no amount of subtle comment can destroy.

The Master who had meditated so deeply on the rebirth of arts and sciences, on the inward beauty of all things, — ships' lines, women's faces — and on the visible aspects of nature was profoundly right in his pronouncement on the work that is done on the earth. From the hard work of men are born the sympathetic consciousness of a common destiny, the fidelity to right practice which makes great craftsmen, the sense of right conduct which we may call honour, the devotion to our calling and the idealism which is not a misty, winged angel without eyes, but a divine figure of terrestrial aspect with a clear glance and with its feet resting firmly on the earth on which it was born.

And work will overcome all evil, except ignorance, which is the condition of humanity and, like the ambient air, fills the space between the various sorts and conditions of men, which breeds hatred, fear, and contempt between the masses of mankind, and puts on men's lips, on their innocent lips, words that are thoughtless and vain.

Thoughtless, for instance, were the words that (in all innocence, I believe) came on the lips of a prominent statesman making in the House of Commons an eulogistic reference to the British Merchant Service. In this name I include men of diverse status and origin, who live on and by the sea, by it exclusively, outside all professional pretensions and social formulas, men for whom not only their daily bread but their collective character, their personal achievement and their individual merit come from the sea. Those words of the statesman were meant kindly; but, after all, this is not a complete excuse. Rightly or wrongly, we expect from a man of national importance a larger and at the same time a more scrupulous precision of speech, for it is possible that it may go echoing down the ages. His words were:

"It is right when thinking of the Navy not to forget the men of the Merchant Service, who have shown — and it is more surprising because they have had no traditions towards it — courage as great," etc., etc.

And then he went on talking of the execution of Captain Fryatt, an event of undying memory, but less connected with the permanent, unchangeable conditions of sea service than with the wrong view German minds delight in taking of Englishmen's psychology. The enemy, he said, meant by this atrocity to frighten our sailors away from the sea.

"What has happened?" he goes on to ask. "Never at any time in peace have sailors stayed so short a time ashore or shown such a readiness to step again into a ship."

Which means, in other words, that they answered to the call. I should like to know at what time of history the English Merchant Service, the great body of merchant seamen, had failed to answer the call. Noticed or unnoticed, ignored or commanded, they have answered invariably the call to do their work, the very conditions of which made them what they are. They have always served the nation's needs through their own invariable fidelity to the demands of their special life; but with the development and complexity of material civilisation they grew less prominent to the nation's eye among all the vast schemes of national industry. Never was the need greater and the call to the services more urgent than to-day. And those inconspicuous workers on whose qualities depends so much of the national welfare have answered it without dismay, facing risk without glory, in the perfect faithfulness to that tradition

which the speech of the statesman denies to them at the very moment when he thinks fit to praise their courage . . . and mention his surprise!

The hour of opportunity has struck — not for the first time — for the Merchant Service; and if I associate myself with all my heart in the admiration and the praise which is the greatest reward of brave men I must be excused from joining in any sentiment of surprise. It is perhaps because I have not been born to the inheritance of that tradition, which has yet fashioned the fundamental part of my character in my young days, that I am so consciously aware of it and venture to vindicate its existence in this outspoken manner.

Merchant seamen have always been what they are now, from their earliest days, before the Royal Navy had been fashioned out of the material they furnished for the hands of kings and statesmen. Their work has made them, as work undertaken with single-minded devotion makes men, giving to their achievements that vitality and continuity in which their souls are expressed, tempered and matured through the succeeding generations. In its simplest definition the work of merchant seamen has been to take ships entrusted to their care from port to port across the seas; and, from the highest to the lowest, to watch and labour with devotion for the safety of the property and the lives committed to their skill and fortitude through the hazards of innumerable voyages.

That was always the clear task, the single aim, the simple ideal, the only problem for an unselfish solution. The terms of it have changed with the years, its risks have worn different aspects from time to time. There are no longer any unexplored seas. Human ingenuity has devised better means to meet the dangers of natural forces. But it is always the same problem. The youngsters who were growing up at sea at the end of my service are commanding ships now. At least I have heard of some of them who do. And whatever the shape and power of their ships the character of the duty remains the same. A mine or a torpedo that strikes your ship is not so very different from a sharp, uncharted rock tearing her life out of her in another way. At a greater cost of vital energy, under the well-nigh intolerable stress of vigilance and resolution, they are doing steadily the work of their professional forefathers in the midst of multiplied dangers. They go to and fro across the oceans on their everlasting task: the same men, the same stout hearts, the same fidelity to an exacting tradition created by simple toilers who in their time knew how to live and die at sea.

Allowed to share in this work and in this tradition for something like twenty years, I am bold enough to think that perhaps I am not altogether unworthy to speak of it. It was the sphere not only of my activity but, I may safely say, also of my affections; but after such a close connection it is very difficult to avoid bringing in one's own personality. Without looking at all at the aspects of the Labour problem, I can safely affirm that I have never, never seen British seamen refuse any risk, any exertion, any effort of spirit or body up to the extremest demands of their calling. Years ago — it seems ages ago — I have seen the crew of a British ship fight the fire in the cargo for a whole sleepless week and then, with her decks blown up, I have seen them still continue the fight to save the floating shell. And at last I have seen them refuse to be taken off by a vessel standing by, and this only in order "to see the last of our ship," at the word, at the simple word, of a man who commanded them, a worthy soul indeed, but of no heroic aspect. I have seen that. I have shared their days in small boats. Hard days. Ages ago. And now let me mention a story of to-day.

I will try to relate it here mainly in the words of the chief engineer of a certain steamship which, after bunkering, left Lerwick, bound for Iceland. The weather was cold, the sea pretty rough, with a stiff head wind. All went well till next day, about 1.30 p.m., then the captain sighted a suspicious object far away to starboard. Speed was increased at once to close in with the Faroes and good lookouts were set fore and aft. Nothing further was seen of the suspicious object, but about half-past three without any warning the ship was struck amidships by a torpedo which exploded in the bunkers. None of the crew was injured by the explosion, and all hands, without exception, behaved admirably.

The chief officer with his watch managed to lower the No. 3 boat. Two other boats had been shattered by the explosion, and though another lifeboat was cleared and ready, there was no time to lower it, and "some of us jumped while others were washed overboard. Meantime the captain had been busy handing

lifebelts to the men and cheering them up with words and smiles, with no thought of his own safety." The ship went down in less than four minutes. The captain was the last man on board, going down with her, and was sucked under. On coming up he was caught under an upturned boat to which five hands were clinging. "One lifeboat," says the chief engineer, "which was floating empty in the distance was cleverly manoeuvred to our assistance by the steward, who swam off to her pluckily. Our next endeavour was to release the captain, who was entangled under the boat. As it was impossible to right her, we set-to to split her side open with the boat hook, because by awful bad luck the head of the axe we had flew off at the first blow and was lost. The rescue took thirty minutes, and the extricated captain was in a pitiable condition, being badly bruised and having swallowed a lot of salt water. He was unconscious. While at that work the submarine came to the surface quite close and made a complete circle round us, the seven men that we counted on the conning tower laughing at our efforts.

"There were eighteen of us saved. I deeply regret the loss of the chief officer, a fine fellow and a kind shipmate showing splendid promise. The other men lost — one A.B., one greaser, and two firemen — were quiet, conscientious, good fellows."

With no restoratives in the boat, they endeavoured to bring the captain round by means of massage. Meantime the oars were got out in order to reach the Faroes, which were about thirty miles dead to windward, but after about nine hours' hard work they had to desist, and, putting out a sea-anchor, they took shelter under the canvas boat-cover from the cold wind and torrential rain. Says the narrator: "We were all very wet and miserable, and decided to have two biscuits all round. The effects of this and being under the shelter of the canvas warmed us up and made us feel pretty well contented. At about sunrise the captain showed signs of recovery, and by the time the sun was up he was looking a lot better, much to our relief."

After being informed of what had been done the revived captain "dropped a bombshell in our midst," by proposing to make for the Shetlands, which were only one hundred and fifty miles off. "The wind is in our favour," he said. "I promise to take you there. Are you all willing?" This — comments the chief engineer — "from a man who but a few hours previously had been hauled back from the grave!" The captain's confident manner inspired the men, and they all agreed. Under the best possible conditions a boat-run of one hundred and fifty miles in the North Atlantic and in winter weather would have been a feat of no mean merit, but in the circumstances it required uncommon nerve and skill to carry out such a promise. With an oar for a mast and the boat-cover cut down for a sail they started on their dangerous journey, with the boat compass and the stars for their guide. The captain's undaunted serenity buoyed them all up against despondency. He told them what point he was making for. It was Ronas Hill, "and we struck it as straight as a die."

The chief engineer commends also the ship steward for the manner in which he made the little food they had last, the cheery spirit he manifested, and the great help he was to the captain by keeping the men in good humour. That trusty man had "his hands cruelly chafed with the rowing, but it never damped his spirits."

They made Ronas Hill (as straight as a die), and the chief engineer cannot express their feelings of gratitude and relief when they set their feet on the shore. He praises the unbounded kindness of the people in Hillswick. "It seemed to us all like Paradise regained," he says, concluding his letter with the words:

"And there was our captain, just his usual self, as if nothing had happened, as if bringing the boat that hazardous journey and being the means of saving eighteen souls was to him an everyday occurrence."

Such is the chief engineer's testimony to the continuity of the old tradition of the sea, which made by the work of men has in its turn created for them their simple ideal of conduct.

Confidence — 1919

Chapter 1

The seamen hold up the Edifice. They have been holding it up in the past and they will hold it up in the future, whatever this future may contain of logical development, of unforeseen new shapes, of great promises and of dangers still unknown.

It is not an unpardonable stretching of the truth to say that the British Empire rests on transportation. I am speaking now naturally of the sea, as a man who has lived on it for many years, at a time, too, when on sighting a vessel on the horizon of any of the great oceans it was perfectly safe to bet any reasonable odds on her being a British ship — with the certitude of making a pretty good thing of it at the end of the voyage.

I have tried to convey here in popular terms the strong impression remembered from my young days. The Red Ensign prevailed on the high seas to such an extent that one always experienced a slight shock on seeing some other combination of colours blow out at the peak or flag-pole of any chance encounter in deep water. In the long run the persistence of the visual fact forced upon the mind a half-unconscious sense of its inner significance. We have all heard of the well-known view that trade follows the flag. And that is not always true. There is also this truth that the flag, in normal conditions, represents commerce to the eye and understanding of the average man. This is a truth, but it is not the whole truth. In its numbers and in its unfailing ubiquity, the British Red Ensign, under which naval actions too have been fought, adventures entered upon and sacrifices offered, represented in fact something more than the prestige of a great trade.

The flutter of that piece of red bunting showered sentiment on the nations of the earth. I will not venture to say that in every case that sentiment was of a friendly nature. Of hatred, half concealed or concealed not at all, this is not the place to speak; and indeed the little I have seen of it about the world was tainted with stupidity and seemed to confess in its very violence the extreme poorness of its case. But generally it was more in the nature of envious wonder qualified by a half-concealed admiration.

That flag, which but for the Union Jack in the corner might have been adopted by the most radical of revolutions, affirmed in its numbers the stability of purpose, the continuity of effort and the greatness of Britain's opportunity pursued steadily in the order and peace of the world: that world which for twenty-five years or so after 1870 may be said to have been living in holy calm and hushed silence with only now and then a slight clink of metal, as if in some distant part of mankind's habitation some restless body had stumbled over a heap of old armour.

Chapter 2

We who have learned by now what a world-war is like may be excused for considering the disturbances of that period as insignificant brawls, mere hole-and-corner scuffles. In the world, which memory depicts as so wonderfully tranquil all over, it was the sea yet that was the safest place. And the Red Ensign, commercial, industrial, historic, pervaded the sea! Assertive only by its numbers, highly significant, and, under its character of a trade — emblem, nationally expressive, it was symbolic of old and new ideas, of conservatism and progress, of routine and enterprise, of drudgery and adventure — and of a certain easy-going optimism that would have appeared the Father of Sloth itself if it had not been so stubbornly, so everlastingly active.

The unimaginative, hard-working men, great and small, who served this flag afloat and ashore, nursed dumbly a mysterious sense of its greatness. It sheltered magnificently their vagabond labours under the sleepless eye of the sun. It held up the Edifice. But it crowned it too. This is not the extravagance of a mixed metaphor. It is the sober expression of a not very complex truth. Within that double function the national life that flag represented so well went on in safety, assured of its daily crust of bread for which we all pray and without which we would have to give up faith, hope and charity, the intellectual conquests of our minds and the sanctified strength of our labouring arms. I may permit myself to speak of it in these terms because as a matter of fact it was on that very symbol that I had founded my life and (as I have said elsewhere in a moment of outspoken gratitude) had known for many years no other roof above my head.

In those days that symbol was not particularly regarded. Superficially and definitely it represented but one of the forms of national activity rather remote from the close-knit organisations of other industries, a kind of toil not immediately under the public eye. It was of its Navy that the nation, looking out of the windows of its world-wide Edifice, was proudly aware. And that was but fair. The Navy is the armed man at the gate. An existence depending upon the sea must be guarded with a jealous, sleepless vigilance, for the sea is but a fickle friend.

It had provoked conflicts, encouraged ambitions, and had lured some nations to destruction — as we know. He — man or people — who, boasting of long years of familiarity with the sea, neglects the strength and cunning of his right hand is a fool. The pride and trust of the nation in its Navy so strangely mingled with moments of neglect, caused by a particularly thick-headed idealism, is perfectly justified. It is also very proper: for it is good for a body of men conscious of a great responsibility to feel themselves recognised, if only in that fallible, imperfect and often irritating way in which recognition is sometimes offered to the deserving.

But the Merchant Service had never to suffer from that sort of irritation. No recognition was thrust on it offensively, and, truth to say, it did not seem to concern itself unduly with the claims of its own obscure merit. It had no consciousness. It had no words. It had no time. To these busy men their work was but the ordinary labour of earning a living; their duties in their ever-recurring round had, like the sun itself, the commonness of daily things; their individual fidelity was not so much united as merely co-ordinated by an aim that shone with no spiritual lustre. They were everyday men. They were that, eminently. When the great opportunity came to them to link arms in response to a supreme call they received it with characteristic simplicity, incorporating self-sacrifice into the texture of their common task, and, as far as emotion went, framing the horror of mankind's catastrophic time within the rigid rules of their professional conscience. And who can say that they could have done better than this?

Such was their past both remote and near. It has been stubbornly consistent, and as this consistency was based upon the character of men fashioned by a very old tradition, there is no doubt that it will endure. Such changes as came into the sea life have been for the main part mechanical and affecting only the material conditions of that inbred consistency. That men don't change is a profound truth. They don't change because it is not necessary for them to change even if they could accomplish that miracle. It is enough for them to be infinitely adaptable — as the last four years have abundantly proved.

Chapter 3

Thus one may await the future without undue excitement and with unshaken confidence. Whether the hues of sunrise are angry or benign, gorgeous or sinister, we shall always have the same sky over our heads. Yet by a kindly dispensation of Providence the human faculty of astonishment will never lack food. What could be more surprising for instance, than the calm invitation to Great Britain to discard the force and protection of its Navy? It has been suggested, it has been proposed — I don't know whether it has been pressed. Probably not much. For if the excursions of audacious folly have no bounds that human eye can see, reason has the habit of never straying very far away from its throne.

It is not the first time in history that excited voices have been heard urging the warrior still panting from the fray to fling his tried weapons on the altar of peace, for they would be needed no more! And such voices have been, in undying hope or extreme weariness, listened to sometimes. But not for long. After all every sort of shouting is a transitory thing. It is the grim silence of facts that remains.

The British Merchant Service has been challenged in its supremacy before. It will be challenged again. It may be even asked menacingly in the name of some humanitarian doctrine or some empty ideal to step down voluntarily from that place which it has managed to keep for so many years. But I imagine that it will take more than words of brotherly love or brotherly anger (which, as is well known, is the worst kind of anger) to drive British seamen, armed or unarmed, from the seas. Firm in this indestructible if not easily explained conviction, I can allow myself to think placidly of that long, long future which I shall not see.

My confidence rests on the hearts of men who do not change, though they may forget many things for a time and even forget to be themselves in a moment of false enthusiasm. But of that I am not afraid. It will not be for long. I know the men. Through the kindness of the Admiralty (which, let me confess here in a white sheet, I repaid by the basest ingratitude) I was permitted during the war to renew my contact with the British seamen of the merchant service. It is to their generosity in recognising me under the shore rust of twenty-five years as one of themselves that I owe one of the deepest emotions of my life. Never for a moment did I feel among them like an idle, wandering ghost from a distant past. They talked to me seriously, openly, and with professional precision, of facts, of events, of implements, I had never heard of in my time; but the hands I grasped were like the hands of the generation which had trained my youth and is now no more. I recognised the character of their glances, the accent of their voices. Their moving tales of modern instances were presented to me with that peculiar turn of mind flavoured by the inherited humour and sagacity of the sea. I don't know what the seaman of the future will be like. He may have to live all his days with a telephone tied up to his head and bristle all over with scientific antennæ like a figure in a fantastic tale. But he will always be the man revealed to us lately, immutable in his slight variations like the closed path of this planet of ours on which he must find his exact position once, at the very least, in every twenty-four hours.

The greatest desideratum of a sailor's life is to be "certain of his position." It is a source of great worry at times, but I don't think that it need be so at this time. Yet even the best position has its dangers on account of the fickleness of the elements. But I think that, left untrammelled to the individual effort of its creators and to the collective spirit of its servants, the British Merchant Service will manage to maintain its position on this restless and watery globe.

Flight — 1917

To begin at the end, I will say that the "landing" surprised me by a slight and very characteristically "dead" sort of shock.

I may fairly call myself an amphibious creature. A good half of my active existence has been passed in familiar contact with salt water, and I was aware, theoretically, that water is not an elastic body: but it was only then that I acquired the absolute conviction of the fact. I remember distinctly the thought flashing through my head: "By Jove! it isn't elastic!" Such is the illuminating force of a particular experience.

This landing (on the water of the North Sea) was effected in a Short biplane after one hour and twenty minutes in the air. I reckon every minute like a miser counting his hoard, for, if what I've got is mine, I am not likely now to increase the tale. That feeling is the effect of age. It strikes me as I write that, when next time I leave the surface of this globe, it won't be to soar bodily above it in the air. Quite the contrary. And I am not thinking of a submarine either. . . .

But let us drop this dismal strain and go back logically to the beginning. I must confess that I started on that flight in a state — I won't say of fury, but of a most intense irritation. I don't remember ever feeling so annoyed in my life.

It came about in this way. Two or three days before, I had been invited to lunch at an R.N.A.S. station, and was made to feel very much at home by the nicest lot of quietly interesting young men it had ever been my good fortune to meet. Then I was taken into the sheds. I walked respectfully round and round a lot of machines of all kinds, and the more I looked at them the more I felt somehow that for all the effect they produced on me they might have been so many land-vehicles of an eccentric design. So I said to Commander O., who very kindly was conducting me: "This is all very fine, but to realise what one is looking at, one must have been up."

He said at once: "I'll give you a flight to-morrow if you like."

I postulated that it should be none of those "ten minutes in the air" affairs. I wanted a real business flight. Commander O. assured me that I would get "awfully bored," but I declared that I was willing to take that risk. "Very well," he said. "Eleven o'clock to-morrow. Don't be late."

I am sorry to say I was about two minutes late, which was enough, however, for Commander O. to greet me with a shout from a great distance: "Oh! You are coming, then!"

"Of course I am coming," I yelled indignantly.

He hurried up to me. "All right. There's your machine, and here's your pilot. Come along."

A lot of officers closed round me, rushed me into a hut: two of them began to button me into the coat, two more were ramming a cap on my head, others stood around with goggles, with binoculars. . . I couldn't understand the necessity of such haste. We weren't going to chase Fritz. There was no sign of Fritz anywhere in the blue. Those dear boys did not seem to notice my age — fifty-eight, if a day — nor my infirmities — a gouty subject for years. This disregard was very flattering, and I tried to live up to it, but the pace seemed to me terrific. They galloped me across a vast expanse of open ground to the water's edge.

The machine on its carriage seemed as big as a cottage, and much more imposing. My young pilot went up like a bird. There was an idle, able-bodied ladder loafing against a shed within fifteen feet of me, but as nobody seemed to notice it, I recommended myself mentally to Heaven and started climbing after the pilot. The close view of the real fragility of that rigid structure startled me considerably, while Commander O. discomposed me still more by shouting repeatedly: "Don't put your foot there!" I didn't know where to put my foot. There was a slight crack; I heard some swear-words below me, and then

with a supreme effort I rolled in and dropped into a basket-chair, absolutely winded. A small crowd of mechanics and officers were looking up at me from the ground, and while I gasped visibly I thought to myself that they would be sure to put it down to sheer nervousness. But I hadn't breath enough in my body to stick my head out and shout down to them:

"You know, it isn't that at all!"

Generally I try not to think of my age and infirmities. They are not a cheerful subject. But I was never so angry and disgusted with them as during that minute or so before the machine took the water. As to my feelings in the air, those who will read these lines will know their own, which are so much nearer the mind and the heart than any writings of an unprofessional can be. At first all my faculties were absorbed and as if neutralised by the sheer novelty of the situation. The first to emerge was the sense of security so much more perfect than in any small boat I've ever been in; the, as it were, material, stillness, and immobility (though it was a bumpy day). I very soon ceased to hear the roar of the wind and engines — unless, indeed, some cylinders missed, when I became acutely aware of that. Within the rigid spread of the powerful planes, so strangely motionless I had sometimes the illusion of sitting as if by enchantment in a block of suspended marble. Even while looking over at the aeroplane's shadow running prettily over land and sea, I had the impression of extreme slowness. I imagine that had she suddenly nose-dived out of control, I would have gone to the final smash without a single additional heartbeat. I am sure I would not have known. It is doubtless otherwise with the man in control.

But there was no dive, and I returned to earth (after an hour and twenty minutes) without having felt "bored" for a single second. I descended (by the ladder) thinking that I would never go flying again. No, never any more — lest its mysterious fascination, whose invisible wing had brushed my heart up there, should change to unavailing regret in a man too old for its glory.

Some Reflections on the Loss of the Titanic — 1912

It is with a certain bitterness that one must admit to oneself that the late S.S. Titanic had a "good press." It is perhaps because I have no great practice of daily newspapers (I have never seen so many of them together lying about my room) that the white spaces and the big lettering of the headlines have an incongruously festive air to my eyes, a disagreeable effect of a feverish exploitation of a sensational God-send. And if ever a loss at sea fell under the definition, in the terms of a bill of lading, of Act of God, this one does, in its magnitude, suddenness and severity; and in the chastening influence it should have on the self-confidence of mankind.

I say this with all the seriousness the occasion demands, though I have neither the competence nor the wish to take a theological view of this great misfortune, sending so many souls to their last account. It is but a natural reflection. Another one flowing also from the phraseology of bills of lading (a bill of lading is a shipping document limiting in certain of its clauses the liability of the carrier) is that the "King's Enemies" of a more or less overt sort are not altogether sorry that this fatal mishap should strike the prestige of the greatest Merchant Service of the world. I believe that not a thousand miles from these shores certain public prints have betrayed in gothic letters their satisfaction — to speak plainly — by rather ill-natured comments.

In what light one is to look at the action of the American Senate is more difficult to say. From a certain point of view the sight of the august senators of a great Power rushing to New York and beginning to bully and badger the luckless "Yamsi" — on the very quay-side so to speak — seems to furnish the Shakespearian touch of the comic to the real tragedy of the fatuous drowning of all these people who to the last moment put their trust in mere bigness, in the reckless affirmations of commercial men and mere technicians and in the irresponsible paragraphs of the newspapers booming these ships! Yes, a grim touch of comedy. One asks oneself what these men are after, with this very provincial display of authority. I beg my friends in the United States pardon for calling these zealous senators men. I don't wish to be disrespectful. They may be of the stature of demi-gods for all I know, but at that great distance from the shores of effete Europe and in the presence of so many guileless dead, their size seems diminished from this side. What are they after? What is there for them to find out? We know what had happened. The ship scraped her side against a piece of ice, and sank after floating for two hours and a half, taking a lot of people down with her. What more can they find out from the unfair badgering of the unhappy "Yamsi," or the ruffianly abuse of the same.

"Yamsi," I should explain, is a mere code address, and I use it here symbolically. I have seen commerce pretty close. I know what it is worth, and I have no particular regard for commercial magnates, but one must protest against these Bumble-like proceedings. Is it indignation at the loss of so many lives which is at work here? Well, the American railroads kill very many people during one single year, I dare say. Then why don't these dignitaries come down on the presidents of their own railroads, of which one can't say whether they are mere means of transportation or a sort of gambling game for the use of American plutocrats. Is it only an ardent and, upon the whole, praiseworthy desire for information? But the reports of the inquiry tell us that the august senators, though raising a lot of questions testifying to the complete innocence and even blankness of their minds, are unable to understand what the second officer is saying to them. We are so informed by the press from the other side. Even such a simple expression as that one of the look-out men was stationed in the "eyes of the ship" was too much for the senators of the land of graphic expression. What it must have been in the more recondite matters I won't even

try to think, because I have no mind for smiles just now. They were greatly exercised about the sound of explosions heard when half the ship was under water already. Was there one? Were there two? They seemed to be smelling a rat there! Has not some charitable soul told them (what even schoolboys who read sea stories know) that when a ship sinks from a leak like this, a deck or two is always blown up; and that when a steamship goes down by the head, the boilers may, and often do break adrift with a sound which resembles the sound of an explosion? And they may, indeed, explode, for all I know. In the only case I have seen of a steamship sinking there was such a sound, but I didn't dive down after her to investigate. She was not of 45,000 tons and declared unsinkable, but the sight was impressive enough. I shall never forget the muffled, mysterious detonation, the sudden agitation of the sea round the slowly raised stern, and to this day I have in my eye the propeller, seen perfectly still in its frame against a clear evening sky.

But perhaps the second officer has explained to them by this time this and a few other little facts. Though why an officer of the British merchant service should answer the questions of any king, emperor, autocrat, or senator of any foreign power (as to an event in which a British ship alone was concerned, and which did not even take place in the territorial waters of that power) passes my understanding. The only authority he is bound to answer is the Board of Trade. But with what face the Board of Trade, which, having made the regulations for 10,000 ton ships, put its dear old bald head under its wing for ten years, took it out only to shelve an important report, and with a dreary murmur, "Unsinkable," put it back again, in the hope of not being disturbed for another ten years, with what face it will be putting questions to that man who has done his duty, as to the facts of this disaster and as to his professional conduct in it — well, I don't know! I have the greatest respect for our established authorities. I am a disciplined man, and I have a natural indulgence for the weaknesses of human institutions; but I will own that at times I have regretted their — how shall I say it? — their imponderability. A Board of Trade — what is it? A Board of . . . I believe the Speaker of the Irish Parliament is one of the members of it. A ghost. Less than that; as yet a mere memory. An office with adequate and no doubt comfortable furniture and a lot of perfectly irresponsible gentlemen who exist packed in its equable atmosphere softly, as if in a lot of cotton-wool, and with no care in the world; for there can be no care without personal responsibility — such, for instance, as the seamen have — those seamen from whose mouths this irresponsible institution can take away the bread — as a disciplinary measure. Yes — it's all that. And what more? The name of a politician — a party man! Less than nothing; a mere void without as much as a shadow of responsibility cast into it from that light in which move the masses of men who work, who deal in things and face the realities — not the words — of this life.

Years ago I remember overhearing two genuine shellbacks of the old type commenting on a ship's officer, who, if not exactly incompetent, did not commend himself to their severe judgment of accomplished sailor-men. Said one, resuming and concluding the discussion in a funnily judicial tone:

"The Board of Trade must have been drunk when they gave him his certificate."

I confess that this notion of the Board of Trade as an entity having a brain which could be overcome by the fumes of strong liquor charmed me exceedingly. For then it would have been unlike the limited companies of which some exasperated wit has once said that they had no souls to be saved and no bodies to be kicked, and thus were free in this world and the next from all the effective sanctions of conscientious conduct. But, unfortunately, the picturesque pronouncement overheard by me was only a characteristic sally of an annoyed sailor. The Board of Trade is composed of bloodless departments. It has no limbs and no physiognomy, or else at the forthcoming inquiry it might have paid to the victims of the Titanic disaster the small tribute of a blush. I ask myself whether the Marine Department of the Board of Trade did really believe, when they decided to shelve the report on equipment for a time, that a ship of 45,000 tons, that any ship, could be made practically indestructible by means of water-tight bulkheads? It seems incredible to anybody who had ever reflected upon the properties of material, such as wood or steel. You can't, let builders say what they like, make a ship of such dimensions as strong proportionately as a much smaller one. The shocks our old whalers had to stand amongst the heavy floes in Baffin's Bay were perfectly staggering, notwithstanding the most skilful handling, and yet they

lasted for years. The Titanic, if one may believe the last reports, has only scraped against a piece of ice which, I suspect, was not an enormously bulky and comparatively easily seen berg, but the low edge of a floe — and sank. Leisurely enough, God knows — and here the advantage of bulkheads comes in — for time is a great friend, a good helper — though in this lamentable case these bulkheads served only to prolong the agony of the passengers who could not be saved. But she sank, causing, apart from the sorrow and the pity of the loss of so many lives, a sort of surprised consternation that such a thing should have happened at all. Why? You build a 45,000 tons hotel of thin steel plates to secure the patronage of, say, a couple of thousand rich people (for if it had been for the emigrant trade alone, there would have been no such exaggeration of mere size), you decorate it in the style of the Pharaohs or in the Louis Quinze style — I don't know which — and to please the aforesaid fatuous handful of individuals, who have more money than they know what to do with, and to the applause of two continents, you launch that mass with two thousand people on board at twenty-one knots across the sea — a perfect exhibition of the modern blind trust in mere material and appliances. And then this happens. General uproar. The blind trust in material and appliances has received a terrible shock. I will say nothing of the credulity which accepts any statement which specialists, technicians and office-people are pleased to make, whether for purposes of gain or glory. You stand there astonished and hurt in your profoundest sensibilities. But what else under the circumstances could you expect?

For my part I could much sooner believe in an unsinkable ship of 3,000 tons than in one of 40,000 tons. It is one of those things that stand to reason. You can't increase the thickness of scantling and plates indefinitely. And the mere weight of this bigness is an added disadvantage. In reading the reports, the first reflection which occurs to one is that, if that luckless ship had been a couple of hundred feet shorter, she would have probably gone clear of the danger. But then, perhaps, she could not have had a swimming bath and a French café. That, of course, is a serious consideration. I am well aware that those responsible for her short and fatal existence ask us in desolate accents to believe that if she had hit end on she would have survived. Which, by a sort of coy implication, seems to mean that it was all the fault of the officer of the watch (he is dead now) for trying to avoid the obstacle. We shall have presently, in deference to commercial and industrial interests, a new kind of seamanship. A very new and "progressive" kind. If you see anything in the way, by no means try to avoid it; smash at it full tilt. And then — and then only you shall see the triumph of material, of clever contrivances, of the whole box of engineering tricks in fact, and cover with glory a commercial concern of the most unmitigated sort, a great Trust, and a great ship-building yard, justly famed for the super-excellence of its material and workmanship. Unsinkable! See? I told you she was unsinkable, if only handled in accordance with the new seamanship. Everything's in that. And, doubtless, the Board of Trade, if properly approached, would consent to give the needed instructions to its examiners of Masters and Mates. Behold the examination-room of the future. Enter to the grizzled examiner a young man of modest aspect: "Are you well up in modern seamanship?" "I hope so, sir." "H'm, let's see. You are at night on the bridge in charge of a 150,000 tons ship, with a motor track, organ-loft, etc., etc., with a full cargo of passengers, a full crew of 1,500 café waiters, two sailors and a boy, three collapsible boats as per Board of Trade regulations, and going at your three-quarter speed of, say, about forty knots. You perceive suddenly right ahead, and close to, something that looks like a large ice-floe. What would you do?" "Put the helm amidships." "Very well. Why?" "In order to hit end on." "On what grounds should you endeavour to hit end on?" "Because we are taught by our builders and masters that the heavier the smash, the smaller the damage, and because the requirements of material should be attended to."

And so on and so on. The new seamanship: when in doubt try to ram fairly — whatever's before you. Very simple. If only the Titanic had rammed that piece of ice (which was not a monstrous berg) fairly, every puffing paragraph would have been vindicated in the eyes of the credulous public which pays. But would it have been? Well, I doubt it. I am well aware that in the eighties the steamship Arizona, one of the "greyhounds of the ocean" in the jargon of that day, did run bows on against a very unmistakable iceberg, and managed to get into port on her collision bulkhead. But the Arizona was not, if I remember rightly, 5,000 tons register, let alone 45,000, and she was not going at twenty knots per hour. I can't

be perfectly certain at this distance of time, but her sea-speed could not have been more than fourteen at the outside. Both these facts made for safety. And, even if she had been engined to go twenty knots, there would not have been behind that speed the enormous mass, so difficult to check in its impetus, the terrific weight of which is bound to do damage to itself or others at the slightest contact.

I assure you it is not for the vain pleasure of talking about my own poor experiences, but only to illustrate my point, that I will relate here a very unsensational little incident I witnessed now rather more than twenty years ago in Sydney, N.S.W. Ships were beginning then to grow bigger year after year, though, of course, the present dimensions were not even dreamt of. I was standing on the Circular Quay with a Sydney pilot watching a big mail steamship of one of our best-known companies being brought alongside. We admired her lines, her noble appearance, and were impressed by her size as well, though her length, I imagine, was hardly half that of the Titanic.

She came into the Cove (as that part of the harbour is called), of course very slowly, and at some hundred feet or so short of the quay she lost her way. That quay was then a wooden one, a fine structure of mighty piles and stringers bearing a roadway — a thing of great strength. The ship, as I have said before, stopped moving when some hundred feet from it. Then her engines were rung on slow ahead, and immediately rung off again. The propeller made just about five turns, I should say. She began to move, stealing on, so to speak, without a ripple; coming alongside with the utmost gentleness. I went on looking her over, very much interested, but the man with me, the pilot, muttered under his breath: "Too much, too much." His exercised judgment had warned him of what I did not even suspect. But I believe that neither of us was exactly prepared for what happened. There was a faint concussion of the ground under our feet, a groaning of piles, a snapping of great iron bolts, and with a sound of ripping and splintering, as when a tree is blown down by the wind, a great strong piece of wood, a baulk of squared timber, was displaced several feet as if by enchantment. I looked at my companion in amazement. "I could not have believed it," I declared. "No," he said. "You would not have thought she would have cracked an egg — eh?"

I certainly wouldn't have thought that. He shook his head, and added: "Ah! These great, big things, they want some handling."

Some months afterwards I was back in Sydney. The same pilot brought me in from sea. And I found the same steamship, or else another as like her as two peas, lying at anchor not far from us. The pilot told me she had arrived the day before, and that he was to take her alongside to-morrow. I reminded him jocularly of the damage to the quay. "Oh!" he said, "we are not allowed now to bring them in under their own steam. We are using tugs."

A very wise regulation. And this is my point — that size is to a certain extent an element of weakness. The bigger the ship, the more delicately she must be handled. Here is a contact which, in the pilot's own words, you wouldn't think could have cracked an egg; with the astonishing result of something like eighty feet of good strong wooden quay shaken loose, iron bolts snapped, a baulk of stout timber splintered. Now, suppose that quay had been of granite (as surely it is now) — or, instead of the quay, if there had been, say, a North Atlantic fog there, with a full-grown iceberg in it awaiting the gentle contact of a ship groping its way along blindfold? Something would have been hurt, but it would not have been the iceberg.

Apparently, there is a point in development when it ceases to be a true progress — in trade, in games, in the marvellous handiwork of men, and even in their demands and desires and aspirations of the moral and mental kind. There is a point when progress, to remain a real advance, must change slightly the direction of its line. But this is a wide question. What I wanted to point out here is — that the old Arizona, the marvel of her day, was proportionately stronger, handier, better equipped, than this triumph of modern naval architecture, the loss of which, in common parlance, will remain the sensation of this year. The clatter of the presses has been worthy of the tonnage, of the preliminary pæans of triumph round that vanished hull, of the reckless statements, and elaborate descriptions of its ornate splendour. A great babble of news (and what sort of news too, good heavens!) and eager comment has arisen around this catastrophe, though it seems to me that a less strident note would have been more

becoming in the presence of so many victims left struggling on the sea, of lives miserably thrown away for nothing, or worse than nothing: for false standards of achievement, to satisfy a vulgar demand of a few moneyed people for a banal hotel luxury — the only one they can understand — and because the big ship pays, in one way or another: in money or in advertising value.

It is in more ways than one a very ugly business, and a mere scrape along the ship's side, so slight that, if reports are to be believed, it did not interrupt a card party in the gorgeously fitted (but in chaste style) smoking-room — or was it in the delightful French café? — is enough to bring on the exposure. All the people on board existed under a sense of false security. How false, it has been sufficiently demonstrated. And the fact which seems undoubted, that some of them actually were reluctant to enter the boats when told to do so, shows the strength of that falsehood. Incidentally, it shows also the sort of discipline on board these ships, the sort of hold kept on the passengers in the face of the unforgiving sea. These people seemed to imagine it an optional matter: whereas the order to leave the ship should be an order of the sternest character, to be obeyed unquestioningly and promptly by every one on board, with men to enforce it at once, and to carry it out methodically and swiftly. And it is no use to say it cannot be done, for it can. It has been done. The only requisite is manageableness of the ship herself and of the numbers she carries on board. That is the great thing which makes for safety. A commander should be able to hold his ship and everything on board of her in the hollow of his hand, as it were. But with the modern foolish trust in material, and with those floating hotels, this has become impossible. A man may do his best, but he cannot succeed in a task which from greed, or more likely from sheer stupidity, has been made too great for anybody's strength.

The readers of The English Review, who cast a friendly eye nearly six years ago on my Reminiscences, and know how much the merchant service, ships and men, has been to me, will understand my indignation that those men of whom (speaking in no sentimental phrase, but in the very truth of feeling) I can't even now think otherwise than as brothers, have been put by their commercial employers in the impossibility to perform efficiently their plain duty; and this from motives which I shall not enumerate here, but whose intrinsic unworthiness is plainly revealed by the greatness, the miserable greatness, of that disaster. Some of them have perished. To die for commerce is hard enough, but to go under that sea we have been trained to combat, with a sense of failure in the supreme duty of one's calling is indeed a bitter fate. Thus they are gone, and the responsibility remains with the living who will have no difficulty in replacing them by others, just as good, at the same wages. It was their bitter fate. But I, who can look at some arduous years when their duty was my duty too, and their feelings were my feelings, can remember some of us who once upon a time were more fortunate.

It is of them that I would talk a little, for my own comfort partly, and also because I am sticking all the time to my subject to illustrate my point, the point of manageableness which I have raised just now. Since the memory of the lucky Arizona has been evoked by others than myself, and made use of by me for my own purpose, let me call up the ghost of another ship of that distant day whose less lucky destiny inculcates another lesson making for my argument. The Douro, a ship belonging to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, was rather less than one-tenth the measurement of the Titanic. Yet, strange as it may appear to the ineffable hotel exquisites who form the bulk of the first-class Cross-Atlantic Passengers, people of position and wealth and refinement did not consider it an intolerable hardship to travel in her, even all the way from South America; this being the service she was engaged upon. Of her speed I know nothing, but it must have been the average of the period, and the decorations of her saloons were, I dare say, quite up to the mark; but I doubt if her birth had been boastfully paragraphed all round the Press, because that was not the fashion of the time. She was not a mass of material gorgeously furnished and upholstered. She was a ship. And she was not, in the apt words of an article by Commander C. Crutchley, R.N.R., which I have just read, "run by a sort of hotel syndicate composed of the Chief Engineer, the Purser, and the Captain," as these monstrous Atlantic ferries are. She was really commanded, manned, and equipped as a ship meant to keep the sea: a ship first and last in the fullest meaning of the term, as the fact I am going to relate will show.

She was off the Spanish coast, homeward bound, and fairly full, just like the Titanic; and further, the proportion of her crew to her passengers, I remember quite well, was very much the same. The exact number of souls on board I have forgotten. It might have been nearly three hundred, certainly not more. The night was moonlit, but hazy, the weather fine with a heavy swell running from the westward, which means that she must have been rolling a great deal, and in that respect the conditions for her were worse than in the case of the Titanic. Some time either just before or just after midnight, to the best of my recollection, she was run into amidships and at right angles by a large steamer which after the blow backed out, and, herself apparently damaged, remained motionless at some distance.

My recollection is that the Douro remained afloat after the collision for fifteen minutes or thereabouts. It might have been twenty, but certainly something under the half-hour. In that time the boats were lowered, all the passengers put into them, and the lot shoved off. There was no time to do anything more. All the crew of the Douro went down with her, literally without a murmur. When she went she plunged bodily down like a stone. The only members of the ship's company who survived were the third officer, who was from the first ordered to take charge of the boats, and the seamen told off to man them, two in each. Nobody else was picked up. A quartermaster, one of the saved in the way of duty, with whom I talked a month or so afterwards, told me that they pulled up to the spot, but could neither see a head nor hear the faintest cry.

But I have forgotten. A passenger was drowned. She was a lady's maid who, frenzied with terror, refused to leave the ship. One of the boats waited near by till the chief officer, finding himself absolutely unable to tear the girl away from the rail to which she dung with a frantic grasp, ordered the boat away out of danger. My quartermaster told me that he spoke over to them in his ordinary voice, and this was the last sound heard before the ship sank.

The rest is silence. I daresay there was the usual official inquiry, but who cared for it? That sort of thing speaks for itself with no uncertain voice; though the papers, I remember, gave the event no space to speak of: no large headlines — no headlines at all. You see it was not the fashion at the time. A seaman-like piece of work, of which one cherishes the old memory at this juncture more than ever before. She was a ship commanded, manned, equipped — not a sort of marine Ritz, proclaimed unsinkable and sent adrift with its casual population upon the sea, without enough boats, without enough seamen (but with a Parisian café and four hundred of poor devils of waiters) to meet dangers which, let the engineers say what they like, lurk always amongst the waves; sent with a blind trust in mere material, light-heartedly, to a most miserable, most fatuous disaster.

And there are, too, many ugly developments about this tragedy. The rush of the senatorial inquiry before the poor wretches escaped from the jaws of death had time to draw breath, the vituperative abuse of a man no more guilty than others in this matter, and the suspicion of this aimless fuss being a political move to get home on the M.T. Company, into which, in common parlance, the United States Government has got its knife, I don't pretend to understand why, though with the rest of the world I am aware of the fact. Perhaps there may be an excellent and worthy reason for it; but I venture to suggest that to take advantage of so many pitiful corpses, is not pretty. And the exploiting of the mere sensation on the other side is not pretty in its wealth of heartless inventions. Neither is the welter of Marconi lies which has not been sent vibrating without some reason, for which it would be nauseous to inquire too closely. And the calumnious, baseless, gratuitous, circumstantial lie charging poor Captain Smith with desertion of his post by means of suicide is the vilest and most ugly thing of all in this outburst of journalistic enterprise, without feeling, without honour, without decency.

But all this has its moral. And that other sinking which I have related here and to the memory of which a seaman turns with relief and thankfulness has its moral too. Yes, material may fail, and men, too, may fail sometimes; but more often men, when they are given the chance, will prove themselves truer than steel, that wonderful thin steel from which the sides and the bulkheads of our modern sea-leviathans are made.

Certain Aspects of the Admirable Inquiry Into the Loss of the Titanic — 1912

I have been taken to task by a friend of mine on the "other side" for my strictures on Senator Smith's investigation into the loss of the Titanic, in the number of The English Review for May, 1912. I will admit that the motives of the investigation may have been excellent, and probably were; my criticism bore mainly on matters of form and also on the point of efficiency. In that respect I have nothing to retract. The Senators of the Commission had absolutely no knowledge and no practice to guide them in the conduct of such an investigation; and this fact gave an air of unreality to their zealous exertions. I think that even in the United States there is some regret that this zeal of theirs was not tempered by a large dose of wisdom. It is fitting that people who rush with such ardour to the work of putting questions to men yet gasping from a narrow escape should have, I wouldn't say a tincture of technical information, but enough knowledge of the subject to direct the trend of their inquiry. The newspapers of two continents have noted the remarks of the President of the Senatorial Commission with comments which I will not reproduce here, having a scant respect for the "organs of public opinion," as they fondly believe themselves to be. The absolute value of their remarks was about as great as the value of the investigation they either mocked at or extolled. To the United States Senate I did not intend to be disrespectful. I have for that body, of which one hears mostly in connection with tariffs, as much reverence as the best of Americans. To manifest more or less would be an impertinence in a stranger. I have expressed myself with less reserve on our Board of Trade. That was done under the influence of warm feelings. We were all feeling warmly on the matter at that time. But, at any rate, our Board of Trade Inquiry, conducted by an experienced President, discovered a very interesting fact on the very second day of its sitting: the fact that the water-tight doors in the bulkheads of that wonder of naval architecture could be opened down below by any irresponsible person. Thus the famous closing apparatus on the bridge, paraded as a device of greater safety, with its attachments of warning bells, coloured lights, and all these pretty-pretties, was, in the case of this ship, little better than a technical farce.

It is amusing, if anything connected with this stupid catastrophe can be amusing, to see the secretly crestfallen attitude of technicians. They are the high priests of the modern cult of perfected material and of mechanical appliances, and would fain forbid the profane from inquiring into its mysteries. We are the masters of progress, they say, and you should remain respectfully silent. And they take refuge behind their mathematics. I have the greatest regard for mathematics as an exercise of mind. It is the only manner of thinking which approaches the Divine. But mere calculations, of which these men make so much, when unassisted by imagination and when they have gained mastery over common sense, are the most deceptive exercises of intellect. Two and two are four, and two are six. That is immutable; you may trust your soul to that; but you must be certain first of your quantities. I know how the strength of materials can be calculated away, and also the evidence of one's senses. For it is by some sort of calculation involving weights and levels that the technicians responsible for the Titanic persuaded themselves that a ship not divided by water-tight compartments could be "unsinkable." Because, you know, she was not divided. You and I, and our little boys, when we want to divide, say, a box, take care to procure a piece of wood which will reach from the bottom to the lid. We know that if it does not reach all the way up, the box will not be divided into two compartments. It will be only partly divided. The Titanic was only partly divided. She was just sufficiently divided to drown some poor devils like rats in a trap. It is probable that they would have perished in any case, but it is a particularly horrible

fate to die boxed up like this. Yes, she was sufficiently divided for that, but not sufficiently divided to prevent the water flowing over.

Therefore to a plain man who knows something of mathematics but is not bemused by calculations, she was, from the point of view of "unsinkability," not divided at all. What would you say of people who would boast of a fireproof building, an hotel, for instance, saying, "Oh, we have it divided by fireproof bulkheads which would localise any outbreak," and if you were to discover on closer inspection that these bulkheads closed no more than two-thirds of the openings they were meant to close, leaving above an open space through which draught, smoke, and fire could rush from one end of the building to the other? And, furthermore, that those partitions, being too high to climb over, the people confined in each menaced compartment had to stay there and become asphyxiated or roasted, because no exits to the outside, say to the roof, had been provided! What would you think of the intelligence or candour of these advertising people? What would you think of them? And yet, apart from the obvious difference in the action of fire and water, the cases are essentially the same.

It would strike you and me and our little boys (who are not engineers yet) that to approach — I won't say attain — somewhere near absolute safety, the divisions to keep out water should extend from the bottom right up to the uppermost deck of the hull. I repeat, the hull, because there are above the hull the decks of the superstructures of which we need not take account. And further, as a provision of the commonest humanity, that each of these compartments should have a perfectly independent and free access to that uppermost deck: that is, into the open. Nothing less will do. Division by bulkheads that really divide, and free access to the deck from every water-tight compartment. Then the responsible man in the moment of danger and in the exercise of his judgment could close all the doors of these water-tight bulkheads by whatever clever contrivance has been invented for the purpose, without a qualm at the awful thought that he may be shutting up some of his fellow creatures in a death-trap; that he may be sacrificing the lives of men who, down there, are sticking to the posts of duty as the engine-room staffs of the Merchant Service have never failed to do. I know very well that the engineers of a ship in a moment of emergency are not quaking for their lives, but, as far as I have known them, attend calmly to their duty. We all must die; but, hang it all, a man ought to be given a chance, if not for his life, then at least to die decently. It's bad enough to have to stick down there when something disastrous is going on and any moment may be your last; but to be drowned shut up under deck is too bad. Some men of the Titanic died like that, it is to be feared. Compartmented, so to speak. Just think what it means! Nothing can approach the horror of that fate except being buried alive in a cave, or in a mine, or in your family vault.

So, once more: continuous bulkheads — a clear way of escape to the deck out of each water-tight compartment. Nothing less. And if specialists, the precious specialists of the sort that builds "unsinkable ships," tell you that it cannot be done, don't you believe them. It can be done, and they are quite clever enough to do it too. The objections they will raise, however disguised in the solemn mystery of technical phrases, will not be technical, but commercial. I assure you that there is not much mystery about a ship of that sort. She is a tank. She is a tank ribbed, joisted, stayed, but she is no greater mystery than a tank. The Titanic was a tank eight hundred feet long, fitted as an hotel, with corridors, bed-rooms, halls, and so on (not a very mysterious arrangement truly), and for the hazards of her existence I should think about as strong as a Huntley and Palmer biscuit-tin. I make this comparison because Huntley and Palmer biscuit-tins, being almost a national institution, are probably known to all my readers. Well, about that strong, and perhaps not quite so strong. Just look at the side of such a tin, and then think of a 50,000 ton ship, and try to imagine what the thickness of her plates should be to approach anywhere the relative solidity of that biscuit-tin. In my varied and adventurous career I have been thrilled by the sight of a Huntley and Palmer biscuit-tin kicked by a mule sky-high, as the saying is. It came back to earth smiling, with only a sort of dimple on one of its cheeks. A proportionately severe blow would have burst the side of the Titanic or any other "triumph of modern naval architecture" like brown paper — I am willing to bet.

I am not saying this by way of disparagement. There is reason in things. You can't make a 50,000 ton ship as strong as a Huntley and Palmer biscuit-tin. But there is also reason in the way one accepts facts, and I refuse to be awed by the size of a tank bigger than any other tank that ever went afloat to its doom. The people responsible for her, though disconcerted in their hearts by the exposure of that disaster, are giving themselves airs of superiority — priests of an Oracle which has failed, but still must remain the Oracle. The assumption is that they are ministers of progress. But the mere increase of size is not progress. If it were, elephantiasis, which causes a man's legs to become as large as tree-trunks, would be a sort of progress, whereas it is nothing but a very ugly disease. Yet directly this very disconcerting catastrophe happened, the servants of the silly Oracle began to cry: "It's no use! You can't resist progress. The big ship has come to stay." Well, let her stay on, then, in God's name! But she isn't a servant of progress in any sense. She is the servant of commercialism. For progress, if dealing with the problems of a material world, has some sort of moral aspect — if only, say, that of conquest, which has its distinct value since man is a conquering animal. But bigness is mere exaggeration. The men responsible for these big ships have been moved by considerations of profit to be made by the questionable means of pandering to an absurd and vulgar demand for banal luxury — the seaside hotel luxury. One even asks oneself whether there was such a demand? It is inconceivable to think that there are people who can't spend five days of their life without a suite of apartments, cafés, bands, and such-like refined delights. I suspect that the public is not so very guilty in this matter. These things were pushed on to it in the usual course of trade competition. If to-morrow you were to take all these luxuries away, the public would still travel. I don't despair of mankind. I believe that if, by some catastrophic miracle all ships of every kind were to disappear off the face of the waters, together with the means of replacing them, there would be found, before the end of the week, men (millionaires, perhaps) cheerfully putting out to sea in bath-tubs for a fresh start. We are all like that. This sort of spirit lives in mankind still uncorrupted by the so-called refinements, the ingenuity of tradesmen, who look always for something new to sell, offers to the public.

Let her stay, — I mean the big ship — since she has come to stay. I only object to the attitude of the people, who, having called her into being and having romanced (to speak politely) about her, assume a detached sort of superiority, goodness only knows why, and raise difficulties in the way of every suggestion — difficulties about boats, about bulkheads, about discipline, about davits, all sorts of difficulties. To most of them the only answer would be: "Where there's a will there's a way" — the most wise of proverbs. But some of these objections are really too stupid for anything. I shall try to give an instance of what I mean.

This Inquiry is admirably conducted. I am not alluding to the lawyers representing "various interests," who are trying to earn their fees by casting all sorts of mean aspersions on the characters of all sorts of people not a bit worse than themselves. It is honest to give value for your wages; and the "bravos" of ancient Venice who kept their stilettos in good order and never failed to deliver the stab bargained for with their employers, considered themselves an honest body of professional men, no doubt. But they don't compel my admiration, whereas the conduct of this Inquiry does. And as it is pretty certain to be attacked, I take this opportunity to deposit here my nickel of appreciation. Well, lately, there came before it witnesses responsible for the designing of the ship. One of them was asked whether it would not be advisable to make each coal-bunker of the ship a water-tight compartment by means of a suitable door.

The answer to such a question should have been, "Certainly," for it is obvious to the simplest intelligence that the more water-tight spaces you provide in a ship (consistently with having her workable) the nearer you approach safety. But instead of admitting the expediency of the suggestion, this witness at once raised an objection as to the possibility of closing tightly the door of a bunker on account of the slope of coal. This with the true expert's attitude of "My dear man, you don't know what you are talking about."

Now would you believe that the objection put forward was absolutely futile? I don't know whether the distinguished President of the Court perceived this. Very likely he did, though I don't suppose he

was ever on terms of familiarity with a ship's bunker. But I have. I have been inside; and you may take it that what I say of them is correct. I don't wish to be wearisome to the benevolent reader, but I want to put his finger, so to speak, on the inanity of the objection raised by the expert. A bunker is an enclosed space for holding coals, generally located against the ship's side, and having an opening, a doorway in fact, into the stokehold. Men called trimmers go in there, and by means of implements called slices make the coal run through that opening on to the floor of the stokehold, where it is within reach of the stokers' (firemen's) shovels. This being so, you will easily understand that there is constantly a more or less thick layer of coal generally shaped in a slope lying in that doorway. And the objection of the expert was: that because of this obstruction it would be impossible to close the water-tight door, and therefore that the thing could not be done. And that objection was inane. A water-tight door in a bulkhead may be defined as a metal plate which is made to close a given opening by some mechanical means. And if there were a law of Medes and Persians that a water-tight door should always slide downwards and never otherwise, the objection would be to a great extent valid. But what is there to prevent those doors to be fitted so as to move upwards, or horizontally, or slantwise? In which case they would go through the obstructing layer of coal as easily as a knife goes through butter. Anyone may convince himself of it by experimenting with a light piece of board and a heap of stones anywhere along our roads. Probably the joint of such a door would weep a little — and there is no necessity for its being hermetically tight — but the object of converting bunkers into spaces of safety would be attained. You may take my word for it that this could be done without any great effort of ingenuity. And that is why I have qualified the expert's objection as inane.

Of course, these doors must not be operated from the bridge because of the risk of trapping the coal-trimmers inside the bunker; but on the signal of all other water-tight doors in the ship being closed (as would be done in case of a collision) they too could be closed on the order of the engineer of the watch, who would see to the safety of the trimmers. If the rent in the ship's side were within the bunker itself, that would become manifest enough without any signal, and the rush of water into the stokehold could be cut off directly the doorplate came into its place. Say a minute at the very outside. Naturally, if the blow of a right-angled collision, for instance, were heavy enough to smash through the inner bulkhead of the bunker, why, there would be then nothing to do but for the stokers and trimmers and everybody in there to clear out of the stoke-room. But that does not mean that the precaution of having water-tight doors to the bunkers is useless, superfluous, or impossible. {7}

And talking of stokeholds, firemen, and trimmers, men whose heavy labour has not a single redeeming feature; which is unhealthy, uninspiring, arduous, without the reward of personal pride in it; sheer, hard, brutalising toil, belonging neither to earth nor sea, I greet with joy the advent for marine purposes of the internal combustion engine. The disappearance of the marine boiler will be a real progress, which anybody in sympathy with his kind must welcome. Instead of the unthrifty, unruly, nondescript crowd the boilers require, a crowd of men in the ship but not of her, we shall have comparatively small crews of disciplined, intelligent workers, able to steer the ship, handle anchors, man boats, and at the same time competent to take their place at a bench as fitters and repairers; the resourceful and skilled seamen — mechanics of the future, the legitimate successors of these seamen — sailors of the past, who had their own kind of skill, hardihood, and tradition, and whose last days it has been my lot to share.

One lives and learns and hears very surprising things — things that one hardly knows how to take, whether seriously or jocularly, how to meet — with indignation or with contempt? Things said by solemn experts, by exalted directors, by glorified ticket-sellers, by officials of all sorts. I suppose that one of the uses of such an inquiry is to give such people enough rope to hang themselves with. And I hope that some of them won't neglect to do so. One of them declared two days ago that there was "nothing to learn from the catastrophe of the Titanic." That he had been "giving his best consideration" to certain rules for ten years, and had come to the conclusion that nothing ever happened at sea, and that rules and regulations, boats and sailors, were unnecessary; that what was really wrong with the Titanic was that she carried too many boats.

No; I am not joking. If you don't believe me, pray look back through the reports and you will find it all there. I don't recollect the official's name, but it ought to have been Pooh-Bah. Well, Pooh-Bah said all these things, and when asked whether he really meant it, intimated his readiness to give the subject more of "his best consideration" — for another ten years or so apparently — but he believed, oh yes! he was certain, that had there been fewer boats there would have been more people saved. Really, when reading the report of this admirably conducted inquiry one isn't certain at times whether it is an Admirable Inquiry or a felicitous opéra-bouffe of the Gilbertian type — with a rather grim subject, to be sure.

Yes, rather grim — but the comic treatment never fails. My readers will remember that in the number of The English Review for May, 1912, I quoted the old case of the Arizona, and went on from that to prophesy the coming of a new seamanship (in a spirit of irony far removed from fun) at the call of the sublime builders of unsinkable ships. I thought that, as a small boy of my acquaintance says, I was "doing a sarcasm," and regarded it as a rather wild sort of sarcasm at that. Well, I am blessed (excuse the vulgarism) if a witness has not turned up who seems to have been inspired by the same thought, and evidently longs in his heart for the advent of the new seamanship. He is an expert, of course, and I rather believe he's the same gentleman who did not see his way to fit water-tight doors to bunkers. With ludicrous earnestness he assured the Commission of his intense belief that had only the Titanic struck end-on she would have come into port all right. And in the whole tone of his insistent statement there was suggested the regret that the officer in charge (who is dead now, and mercifully outside the comic scope of this inquiry) was so ill-advised as to try to pass clear of the ice. Thus my sarcastic prophecy, that such a suggestion was sure to turn up, receives an unexpected fulfilment. You will see yet that in deference to the demands of "progress" the theory of the new seamanship will become established: "Whatever you see in front of you — ram it fair. . ." The new seamanship! Looks simple, doesn't it? But it will be a very exact art indeed. The proper handling of an unsinkable ship, you see, will demand that she should be made to hit the iceberg very accurately with her nose, because should you perchance scrape the bluff of the bow instead, she may, without ceasing to be as unsinkable as before, find her way to the bottom. I congratulate the future Transatlantic passengers on the new and vigorous sensations in store for them. They shall go bounding across from iceberg to iceberg at twenty-five knots with precision and safety, and a "cheerful bumpy sound" — as the immortal poem has it. It will be a teeth-loosening, exhilarating experience. The decorations will be Louis-Quinze, of course, and the café shall remain open all night. But what about the priceless Sèvres porcelain and the Venetian glass provided for the service of Transatlantic passengers? Well, I am afraid all that will have to be replaced by silver goblets and plates. Nasty, common, cheap silver. But those who will go to sea must be prepared to put up with a certain amount of hardship.

And there shall be no boats. Why should there be no boats? Because Pooh-Bah has said that the fewer the boats, the more people can be saved; and therefore with no boats at all, no one need be lost. But even if there was a flaw in this argument, pray look at the other advantages the absence of boats gives you. There can't be the annoyance of having to go into them in the middle of the night, and the unpleasantness, after saving your life by the skin of your teeth, of being hauled over the coals by irreproachable members of the Bar with hints that you are no better than a cowardly scoundrel and your wife a heartless monster. Less Boats. No boats! Great should be the gratitude of passage-selling Combines to Pooh-Bah; and they ought to cherish his memory when he dies. But no fear of that. His kind never dies. All you have to do, O Combine, is to knock at the door of the Marine Department, look in, and beckon to the first man you see. That will be he, very much at your service — prepared to affirm after "ten years of my best consideration" and a bundle of statistics in hand, that: "There's no lesson to be learned, and that there is nothing to be done!"

On an earlier day there was another witness before the Court of Inquiry. A mighty official of the White Star Line. The impression of his testimony which the Report gave is of an almost scornful impatience with all this fuss and pother. Boats! Of course we have crowded our decks with them in answer to this ignorant clamour. Mere lumber! How can we handle so many boats with our davits? Your

people don't know the conditions of the problem. We have given these matters our best consideration, and we have done what we thought reasonable. We have done more than our duty. We are wise, and good, and impeccable. And whoever says otherwise is either ignorant or wicked.

This is the gist of these scornful answers which disclose the psychology of commercial undertakings. It is the same psychology which fifty or so years ago, before Samuel Plimsoll uplifted his voice, sent overloaded ships to sea. "Why shouldn't we cram in as much cargo as our ships will hold? Look how few, how very few of them get lost, after all."

Men don't change. Not very much. And the only answer to be given to this manager who came out, impatient and indignant, from behind the plate-glass windows of his shop to be discovered by this inquiry, and to tell us that he, they, the whole three million (or thirty million, for all I know) capital Organisation for selling passages has considered the problem of boats — the only answer to give him is: that this is not a problem of boats at all. It is the problem of decent behaviour. If you can't carry or handle so many boats, then don't cram quite so many people on board. It is as simple as that — this problem of right feeling and right conduct, the real nature of which seems beyond the comprehension of ticket-providers. Don't sell so many tickets, my virtuous dignitary. After all, men and women (unless considered from a purely commercial point of view) are not exactly the cattle of the Western-ocean trade, that used some twenty years ago to be thrown overboard on an emergency and left to swim round and round before they sank. If you can't get more boats, then sell less tickets. Don't drown so many people on the finest, calmest night that was ever known in the North Atlantic — even if you have provided them with a little music to get drowned by. Sell less tickets! That's the solution of the problem, your Mercantile Highness.

But there would be a cry, "Oh! This requires consideration!" (Ten years of it — eh?) Well, no! This does not require consideration. This is the very first thing to do. At once. Limit the number of people by the boats you can handle. That's honesty. And then you may go on fumbling for years about these precious davits which are such a stumbling-block to your humanity. These fascinating patent davits. These davits that refuse to do three times as much work as they were meant to do. Oh! The wickedness of these davits!

One of the great discoveries of this admirable Inquiry is the fascination of the davits. All these people positively can't get away from them. They shuffle about and groan around their davits. Whereas the obvious thing to do is to eliminate the man-handled davits altogether. Don't you think that with all the mechanical contrivances, with all the generated power on board these ships, it is about time to get rid of the hundred-years-old, man-power appliances? Cranes are what is wanted; low, compact cranes with adjustable heads, one to each set of six or nine boats. And if people tell you of insuperable difficulties, if they tell you of the swing and spin of spanned boats, don't you believe them. The heads of the cranes need not be any higher than the heads of the davits. The lift required would be only a couple of inches. As to the spin, there is a way to prevent that if you have in each boat two men who know what they are about. I have taken up on board a heavy ship's boat, in the open sea (the ship rolling heavily), with a common cargo derrick. And a cargo derrick is very much like a crane; but a crane devised ad hoc would be infinitely easier to work. We must remember that the loss of this ship has altered the moral atmosphere. As long as the Titanic is remembered, an ugly rush for the boats may be feared in case of some accident. You can't hope to drill into perfect discipline a casual mob of six hundred firemen and waiters, but in a ship like the Titanic you can keep on a permanent trustworthy crew of one hundred intelligent seamen and mechanics who would know their stations for abandoning ship and would do the work efficiently. The boats could be lowered with sufficient dispatch. One does not want to let rip one's boats by the run all at the same time. With six boat-cranes, six boats would be simultaneously swung, filled, and got away from the side; and if any sort of order is kept, the ship could be cleared of the passengers in a quite short time. For there must be boats enough for the passengers and crew, whether you increase the number of boats or limit the number of passengers, irrespective of the size of the ship. That is the only honest course. Any other would be rather worse than putting sand in the sugar, for which a tradesman gets fined or imprisoned. Do not let us take a romantic view of the

so-called progress. A company selling passages is a tradesman; though from the way these people talk and behave you would think they are benefactors of mankind in some mysterious way, engaged in some lofty and amazing enterprise.

All these boats should have a motor-engine in them. And, of course, the glorified tradesman, the mummified official, the technicians, and all these secretly disconcerted hangers-on to the enormous ticket-selling enterprise, will raise objections to it with every air of superiority. But don't believe them. Doesn't it strike you as absurd that in this age of mechanical propulsion, of generated power, the boats of such ultra-modern ships are fitted with oars and sails, implements more than three thousand years old? Old as the siege of Troy. Older! . . . And I know what I am talking about. Only six weeks ago I was on the river in an ancient, rough, ship's boat, fitted with a two-cylinder motor-engine of 7.5 h.p. Just a common ship's boat, which the man who owns her uses for taking the workmen and stevedores to and from the ships loading at the buoys off Greenhithe. She would have carried some thirty people. No doubt has carried as many daily for many months. And she can tow a twenty-five ton water barge — which is also part of that man's business.

It was a boisterous day, half a gale of wind against the flood tide. Two fellows managed her. A youngster of seventeen was cox (and a first-rate cox he was too); a fellow in a torn blue jersey, not much older, of the usual riverside type, looked after the engine. I spent an hour and a half in her, running up and down and across that reach. She handled perfectly. With eight or twelve oars out she could not have done anything like as well. These two youngsters at my request kept her stationary for ten minutes, with a touch of engine and helm now and then, within three feet of a big, ugly mooring buoy over which the water broke and the spray flew in sheets, and which would have holed her if she had bumped against it. But she kept her position, it seemed to me, to an inch, without apparently any trouble to these boys. You could not have done it with oars. And her engine did not take up the space of three men, even on the assumption that you would pack people as tight as sardines in a box.

Not the room of three people, I tell you! But no one would want to pack a boat like a sardine-box. There must be room enough to handle the oars. But in that old ship's boat, even if she had been desperately overcrowded, there was power (manageable by two riverside youngsters) to get away quickly from a ship's side (very important for your safety and to make room for other boats), the power to keep her easily head to sea, the power to move at five to seven knots towards a rescuing ship, the power to come safely alongside. And all that in an engine which did not take up the room of three people.

A poor boatman who had to scrape together painfully the few sovereigns of the price had the idea of putting that engine into his boat. But all these designers, directors, managers, constructors, and others whom we may include in the generic name of Yamsi, never thought of it for the boats of the biggest tank on earth, or rather on sea. And therefore they assume an air of impatient superiority and make objections — however sick at heart they may be. And I hope they are; at least, as much as a grocer who has sold a tin of imperfect salmon which destroyed only half a dozen people. And you know, the tinning of salmon was "progress" as much at least as the building of the Titanic. More, in fact. I am not attacking shipowners. I care neither more nor less for Lines, Companies, Combines, and generally for Trade arrayed in purple and fine linen than the Trade cares for me. But I am attacking foolish arrogance, which is fair game; the offensive posture of superiority by which they hide the sense of their guilt, while the echoes of the miserably hypocritical cries along the alley-ways of that ship: "Any more women? Any more women?" linger yet in our ears.

I have been expecting from one or the other of them all bearing the generic name of Yamsi, something, a sign of some sort, some sincere utterance, in the course of this Admirable Inquiry, of manly, of genuine compunction. In vain. All trade talk. Not a whisper — except for the conventional expression of regret at the beginning of the yearly report — which otherwise is a cheerful document. Dividends, you know. The shop is doing well.

And the Admirable Inquiry goes on, punctuated by idiotic laughter, by paid-for cries of indignation from under legal wigs, bringing to light the psychology of various commercial characters too stupid to

know that they are giving themselves away — an admirably laborious inquiry into facts that speak, nay shout, for themselves.

I am not a soft-headed, humanitarian faddist. I have been ordered in my time to do dangerous work; I have ordered, others to do dangerous work; I have never ordered a man to do any work I was not prepared to do myself. I attach no exaggerated value to human life. But I know it has a value for which the most generous contributions to the Mansion House and "Heroes" funds cannot pay. And they cannot pay for it, because people, even of the third class (excuse my plain speaking), are not cattle. Death has its sting. If Yamsi's manager's head were forcibly held under the water of his bath for some little time, he would soon discover that it has. Some people can only learn from that sort of experience which comes home to their own dear selves.

I am not a sentimentalist; therefore it is not a great consolation to me to see all these people breveted as "Heroes" by the penny and halfpenny Press. It is no consolation at all. In extremity, in the worst extremity, the majority of people, even of common people, will behave decently. It's a fact of which only the journalists don't seem aware. Hence their enthusiasm, I suppose. But I, who am not a sentimentalist, think it would have been finer if the band of the Titanic had been quietly saved, instead of being drowned while playing — whatever tune they were playing, the poor devils. I would rather they had been saved to support their families than to see their families supported by the magnificent generosity of the subscribers. I am not consoled by the false, written-up, Drury Lane aspects of that event, which is neither drama, nor melodrama, nor tragedy, but the exposure of arrogant folly. There is nothing more heroic in being drowned very much against your will, off a holed, helpless, big tank in which you bought your passage, than in dying of colic caused by the imperfect salmon in the tin you bought from your grocer.

And that's the truth. The unsentimental truth stripped of the romantic garment the Press has wrapped around this most unnecessary disaster.

PROTECTION OF OCEAN LINERS {8} — 1914

The loss of the Empress of Ireland awakens feelings somewhat different from those the sinking of the Titanic had called up on two continents. The grief for the lost and the sympathy for the survivors and the bereaved are the same; but there is not, and there cannot be, the same undercurrent of indignation. The good ship that is gone (I remember reading of her launch something like eight years ago) had not been ushered in with beat of drum as the chief wonder of the world of waters. The company who owned her had no agents, authorised or unauthorised, giving boastful interviews about her unsinkability to newspaper reporters ready to swallow any sort of trade statement if only sensational enough for their readers — readers as ignorant as themselves of the nature of all things outside the commonest experience of the man in the street.

No; there was nothing of that in her case. The company was content to have as fine, staunch, seaworthy a ship as the technical knowledge of that time could make her. In fact, she was as safe a ship as nine hundred and ninety-nine ships out of any thousand now afloat upon the sea. No; whatever sorrow one can feel, one does not feel indignation. This was not an accident of a very boastful marine transportation; this was a real casualty of the sea. The indignation of the New South Wales Premier flashed telegraphically to Canada is perfectly uncalled-for. That statesman, whose sympathy for poor mates and seamen is so suspect to me that I wouldn't take it at fifty per cent. discount, does not seem to know that a British Court of Marine Inquiry, ordinary or extraordinary, is not a contrivance for catching scapegoats. I, who have been seaman, mate and master for twenty years, holding my certificate under the Board of Trade, may safely say that none of us ever felt in danger of unfair treatment from a Court of Inquiry. It is a perfectly impartial tribunal which has never punished seamen for the faults of shipowners — as, indeed, it could not do even if it wanted to. And there is another thing the angry Premier of New South Wales does not know. It is this: that for a ship to float for fifteen minutes after receiving such a blow by a bare stem on her bare side is not so bad.

She took a tremendous list which made the minutes of grace vouchsafed her of not much use for the saving of lives. But for that neither her owners nor her officers are responsible. It would have been

wonderful if she had not listed with such a hole in her side. Even the Aquitania with such an opening in her outer hull would be bound to take a list. I don't say this with the intention of disparaging this latest "triumph of marine architecture" — to use the consecrated phrase. The Aquitania is a magnificent ship. I believe she would bear her people unscathed through ninety-nine per cent. of all possible accidents of the sea. But suppose a collision out on the ocean involving damage as extensive as this one was, and suppose then a gale of wind coming on. Even the Aquitania would not be quite seaworthy, for she would not be manageable.

We have been accustoming ourselves to put our trust in material, technical skill, invention, and scientific contrivances to such an extent that we have come at last to believe that with these things we can overcome the immortal gods themselves. Hence when a disaster like this happens, there arises, besides the shock to our humane sentiments, a feeling of irritation, such as the hon. gentleman at the head of the New South Wales Government has discharged in a telegraphic flash upon the world.

But it is no use being angry and trying to hang a threat of penal servitude over the heads of the directors of shipping companies. You can't get the better of the immortal gods by the mere power of material contrivances. There will be neither scapegoats in this matter nor yet penal servitude for anyone. The Directors of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company did not sell "safety at sea" to the people on board the Empress of Ireland. They never in the slightest degree pretended to do so. What they did was to sell them a sea-passage, giving very good value for the money. Nothing more. As long as men will travel on the water, the sea-gods will take their toll. They will catch good seamen napping, or confuse their judgment by arts well known to those who go to sea, or overcome them by the sheer brutality of elemental forces. It seems to me that the resentful sea-gods never do sleep, and are never weary; wherein the seamen who are mere mortals condemned to unending vigilance are no match for them.

And yet it is right that the responsibility should be fixed. It is the fate of men that even in their contests with the immortal gods they must render an account of their conduct. Life at sea is the life in which, simple as it is, you can't afford to make mistakes.

With whom the mistake lies here, is not for me to say. I see that Sir Thomas Shaughnessy has expressed his opinion of Captain Kendall's absolute innocence. This statement, premature as it is, does him honour, for I don't suppose for a moment that the thought of the material issue involved in the verdict of the Court of Inquiry influenced him in the least. I don't suppose that he is more impressed by the writ of two million dollars nailed (or more likely pasted) to the foremast of the Norwegian than I am, who don't believe that the Storstad is worth two million shillings. This is merely a move of commercial law, and even the whole majesty of the British Empire (so finely invoked by the Sheriff) cannot squeeze more than a very moderate quantity of blood out of a stone. Sir Thomas, in his confident pronouncement, stands loyally by a loyal and distinguished servant of his company.

This thing has to be investigated yet, and it is not proper for me to express my opinion, though I have one, in this place and at this time. But I need not conceal my sympathy with the vehement protestations of Captain Andersen. A charge of neglect and indifference in the matter of saving lives is the cruellest blow that can be aimed at the character of a seaman worthy of the name. On the face of the facts as known up to now the charge does not seem to be true. If upwards of three hundred people have been, as stated in the last reports, saved by the Storstad, then that ship must have been at hand and rendering all the assistance in her power.

As to the point which must come up for the decision of the Court of Inquiry, it is as fine as a hair. The two ships saw each other plainly enough before the fog closed on them. No one can question Captain Kendall's prudence. He has been as prudent as ever he could be. There is not a shadow of doubt as to that.

But there is this question: Accepting the position of the two ships when they saw each other as correctly described in the very latest newspaper reports, it seems clear that it was the Empress of Ireland's duty to keep clear of the collier, and what the Court will have to decide is whether the stopping of the liner was, under the circumstances, the best way of keeping her clear of the other ship, which had the right to proceed cautiously on an unchanged course.

This, reduced to its simplest expression, is the question which the Court will have to decide.

And now, apart from all problems of manoeuvring, of rules of the road, of the judgment of the men in command, away from their possible errors and from the points the Court will have to decide, if we ask ourselves what it was that was needed to avert this disaster costing so many lives, spreading so much sorrow, and to a certain point shocking the public conscience — if we ask that question, what is the answer to be?

I hardly dare set it down. Yes; what was it that was needed, what ingenious combinations of ship-building, what transverse bulkheads, what skill, what genius — how much expense in money and trained thinking, what learned contriving, to avert that disaster?

To save that ship, all these lives, so much anguish for the dying, and so much grief for the bereaved, all that was needed in this particular case in the way of science, money, ingenuity, and seamanship was a man, and a cork-fender.

Yes; a man, a quartermaster, an able seaman that would know how to jump to an order and was not an excitable fool. In my time at sea there was no lack of men in British ships who could jump to an order and were not excitable fools. As to the so-called cork-fender, it is a sort of soft balloon made from a net of thick rope rather more than a foot in diameter. It is such a long time since I have indented for cork-fenders that I don't remember how much these things cost apiece. One of them, hung judiciously over the side at the end of its lanyard by a man who knew what he was about, might perhaps have saved from destruction the ship and upwards of a thousand lives.

Two men with a heavy rope-fender would have been better, but even the other one might have made all the difference between a very damaging accident and downright disaster. By the time the cork-fender had been squeezed between the liner's side and the bluff of the Storstad's bow, the effect of the latter's reversed propeller would have been produced, and the ships would have come apart with no more damage than bulged and started plates. Wasn't there lying about on that liner's bridge, fitted with all sorts of scientific contrivances, a couple of simple and effective cork-fenders — or on board of that Norwegian either? There must have been, since one ship was just out of a dock or harbour and the other just arriving. That is the time, if ever, when cork-fenders are lying about a ship's decks. And there was plenty of time to use them, and exactly in the conditions in which such fenders are effectively used. The water was as smooth as in any dock; one ship was motionless, the other just moving at what may be called dock-speed when entering, leaving, or shifting berths; and from the moment the collision was seen to be unavoidable till the actual contact a whole minute elapsed. A minute, — an age under the circumstances. And no one thought of the homely expedient of dropping a simple, unpretending rope-fender between the destructive stern and the defenceless side!

I appeal confidently to all the seamen in the still United Kingdom, from his Majesty the King (who has been really at sea) to the youngest intelligent A.B. in any ship that will dock next tide in the ports of this realm, whether there was not a chance there. I have followed the sea for more than twenty years; I have seen collisions; I have been involved in a collision myself; and I do believe that in the case under consideration this little thing would have made all that enormous difference — the difference between considerable damage and an appalling disaster.

Many letters have been written to the Press on the subject of collisions. I have seen some. They contain many suggestions, valuable and otherwise; but there is only one which hits the nail on the head. It is a letter to the Times from a retired Captain of the Royal Navy. It is printed in small type, but it deserved to be printed in letters of gold and crimson. The writer suggests that all steamers should be obliged by law to carry hung over their stern what we at sea call a "pudding."

This solution of the problem is as wonderful in its simplicity as the celebrated trick of Columbus's egg, and infinitely more useful to mankind. A "pudding" is a thing something like a bolster of stout rope-net stuffed with old junk, but thicker in the middle than at the ends. It can be seen on almost every tug working in our docks. It is, in fact, a fixed rope-fender always in a position where presumably it would do most good. Had the Storstad carried such a "pudding" proportionate to her size (say, two feet diameter in the thickest part) across her stern, and hung above the level of her hawse-pipes, there

would have been an accident certainly, and some repair-work for the nearest ship-yard, but there would have been no loss of life to deplore.

It seems almost too simple to be true, but I assure you that the statement is as true as anything can be. We shall see whether the lesson will be taken to heart. We shall see. There is a Commission of learned men sitting to consider the subject of saving life at sea. They are discussing bulkheads, boats, davits, manning, navigation, but I am willing to bet that not one of them has thought of the humble "pudding." They can make what rules they like. We shall see if, with that disaster calling aloud to them, they will make the rule that every steamship should carry a permanent fender across her stern, from two to four feet in diameter in its thickest part in proportion to the size of the ship. But perhaps they may think the thing too rough and unsightly for this scientific and æsthetic age. It certainly won't look very pretty but I make bold to say it will save more lives at sea than any amount of the Marconi installations which are being forced on the shipowners on that very ground — the safety of lives at sea.

We shall see!

* * * * *

To the Editor of the Daily Express.

SIR,

As I fully expected, this morning's post brought me not a few letters on the subject of that article of mine in the Illustrated London News. And they are very much what I expected them to be.

I shall address my reply to Captain Littlehales, since obviously he can speak with authority, and speaks in his own name, not under a pseudonym. And also for the reason that it is no use talking to men who tell you to shut your head for a confounded fool. They are not likely to listen to you.

But if there be in Liverpool anybody not too angry to listen, I want to assure him or them that my exclamatory line, "Was there no one on board either of these ships to think of dropping a fender — etc.," was not uttered in the spirit of blame for anyone. I would not dream of blaming a seaman for doing or omitting to do anything a person sitting in a perfectly safe and unsinkable study may think of. All my sympathy goes to the two captains; much the greater share of it to Captain Kendall, who has lost his ship and whose load of responsibility was so much heavier! I may not know a great deal, but I know how anxious and perplexing are those nearly end-on approaches, so infinitely more trying to the men in charge than a frank right-angle crossing.

I may begin by reminding Captain Littlehales that I, as well as himself, have had to form my opinion, or rather my vision, of the accident, from printed statements, of which many must have been loose and inexact and none could have been minutely circumstantial. I have read the reports of the Times and the Daily Telegraph, and no others. What stands in the columns of these papers is responsible for my conclusion — or perhaps for the state of my feelings when I wrote the Illustrated London News article.

From these sober and unsensational reports, I derived the impression that this collision was a collision of the slowest sort. I take it, of course, that both the men in charge speak the strictest truth as to preliminary facts. We know that the Empress of Ireland was for a time lying motionless. And if the captain of the Storstad stopped his engines directly the fog came on (as he says he did), then taking into account the adverse current of the river, the Storstad, by the time the two ships sighted each other again, must have been barely moving over the ground. The "over the ground" speed is the only one that matters in this discussion. In fact, I represented her to myself as just creeping on ahead — no more. This, I contend, is an imaginative view (and we can form no other) not utterly absurd for a seaman to adopt.

So much for the imaginative view of the sad occurrence which caused me to speak of the fender, and be chided for it in unmeasured terms. Not by Captain Littlehales, however, and I wish to reply to what he says with all possible deference. His illustration borrowed from boxing is very apt, and in a certain sense makes for my contention. Yes. A blow delivered with a boxing-glove will draw blood or knock a man out; but it would not crush in his nose flat or break his jaw for him — at least, not always. And this is exactly my point.

Twice in my sea life I have had occasion to be impressed by the preserving effect of a fender. Once I was myself the man who dropped it over. Not because I was so very clever or smart, but simply because I happened to be at hand. And I agree with Captain Littlehales that to see a steamer's stern coming at you at the rate of only two knots is a staggering experience. The thing seems to have power enough behind it to cut half through the terrestrial globe.

And perhaps Captain Littlehales is right? It may be that I am mistaken in my appreciation of circumstances and possibilities in this case — or in any such case. Perhaps what was really wanted there was an extraordinary man and an extraordinary fender. I care nothing if possibly my deep feeling has betrayed me into something which some people call absurdity.

Absurd was the word applied to the proposal for carrying "enough boats for all" on board the big liners. And my absurdity can affect no lives, break no bones — need make no one angry. Why should I care, then, as long as out of the discussion of my absurdity there will emerge the acceptance of the suggestion of Captain F. Papillon, R.N., for the universal and compulsory fitting of very heavy collision fenders on the stems of all mechanically propelled ships?

An extraordinary man we cannot always get from heaven on order, but an extraordinary fender that will do its work is well within the power of a committee of old boatswains to plan out, make, and place in position. I beg to ask, not in a provocative spirit, but simply as to a matter of fact which he is better qualified to judge than I am — Will Captain Littlehales affirm that if the Storstad had carried, slung securely across the stem, even nothing thicker than a single bale of wool (an ordinary, hand-pressed, Australian wool-bale), it would have made no difference?

If scientific men can invent an air cushion, a gas cushion, or even an electricity cushion (with wires or without), to fit neatly round the stems and bows of ships, then let them go to work, in God's name and produce another "marvel of science" without loss of time. For something like this has long been due — too long for the credit of that part of mankind which is not absurd, and in which I include, among others, such people as marine underwriters, for instance.

Meanwhile, turning to materials I am familiar with, I would put my trust in canvas, lots of big rope, and in large, very large quantities of old junk.

It sounds awfully primitive, but if it will mitigate the mischief in only fifty per cent. of cases, is it not well worth trying? Most collisions occur at slow speeds, and it ought to be remembered that in case of a big liner's loss, involving many lives, she is generally sunk by a ship much smaller than herself.

JOSEPH CONRAD.

A Friendly Place

Eighteen years have passed since I last set foot in the London Sailors' Home. I was not staying there then; I had gone in to try to find a man I wanted to see. He was one of those able seamen who, in a watch, are a perfect blessing to a young officer. I could perhaps remember here and there among the shadows of my sea-life a more daring man, or a more agile man, or a man more expert in some special branch of his calling — such as wire splicing, for instance; but for all-round competence, he was unequalled. As character he was sterling stuff. His name was Anderson. He had a fine, quiet face, kindly eyes, and a voice which matched that something attractive in the whole man. Though he looked yet in the prime of life, shoulders, chest, limbs untouched by decay, and though his hair and moustache were only iron-grey, he was on board ship generally called Old Andy by his fellows. He accepted the name with some complacency.

I made my enquiry at the highly-glazed entry office. The clerk on duty opened an enormous ledger, and after running his finger down a page, informed me that Anderson had gone to sea a week before, in a ship bound round the Horn. Then, smiling at me, he added: "Old Andy. We know him well, here. What a nice fellow!"

I, who knew what a "good man," in a sailor sense, he was, assented without reserve. Heaven only knows when, if ever, he came back from that voyage, to the Sailors' Home of which he was a faithful client.

I went out glad to know he was safely at sea, but sorry not to have seen him; though, indeed, if I had, we would not have exchanged more than a score of words, perhaps. He was not a talkative man, Old Andy, whose affectionate ship-name clung to him even in that Sailors' Home, where the staff understood and liked the sailors (those men without a home) and did its duty by them with an unobtrusive tact, with a patient and humorous sense of their idiosyncrasies, to which I hasten to testify now, when the very existence of that institution is menaced after so many years of most useful work.

Walking away from it on that day eighteen years ago, I was far from thinking it was for the last time. Great changes have come since, over land and sea; and if I were to seek somebody who knew Old Andy it would be (of all people in the world) Mr. John Galsworthy. For Mr. John Galsworthy, Andy, and myself have been shipmates together in our different stations, for some forty days in the Indian Ocean in the early nineties. And, but for us two, Old Andy's very memory would be gone from this changing earth.

Yes, things have changed — the very sky, the atmosphere, the light of judgment which falls on the labours of men, either splendid or obscure. Having been asked to say a word to the public on behalf of the Sailors' Home, I felt immensely flattered — and troubled. Flattered to have been thought of in that connection; troubled to find myself in touch again with that past so deeply rooted in my heart. And the illusion of nearness is so great while I trace these lines that I feel as if I were speaking in the name of that worthy Sailor-Shade of Old Andy, whose faithfully hard life seems to my vision a thing of yesterday.

* * * * *

But though the past keeps firm hold on one, yet one feels with the same warmth that the men and the institutions of to-day have their merit and their claims. Others will know how to set forth before the public the merit of the Sailors' Home in the eloquent terms of hard facts and some few figures. For myself, I can only bring a personal note, give a glimpse of the human side of the good work for sailors ashore, carried on through so many decades with a perfect understanding of the end in view. I have been in touch with the Sailors' Home for sixteen years of my life, off and on; I have seen the changes in

the staff and I have observed the subtle alterations in the physiognomy of that stream of sailors passing through it, in from the sea and out again to sea, between the years 1878 and 1894. I have listened to the talk on the decks of ships in all latitudes, when its name would turn up frequently, and if I had to characterise its good work in one sentence, I would say that, for seamen, the Well Street Home was a friendly place.

It was essentially just that; quietly, unobtrusively, with a regard for the independence of the men who sought its shelter ashore, and with no ulterior aims behind that effective friendliness. No small merit this. And its claim on the generosity of the public is derived from a long record of valuable public service. Since we are all agreed that the men of the merchant service are a national asset worthy of care and sympathy, the public could express this sympathy no better than by enabling the Sailors' Home, so useful in the past, to continue its friendly offices to the seamen of future generations.

Last Essays

Conrad's study, Museum of Canterbury

Contents

Most of the contents of this volume were written subsequent to the publication of "Notes on Life and Letters" in 1921 and these two books together may be said to contain practically all Conrad's miscellaneous writings. There are, it is true, a few short prefaces and some interesting letters to newspapers which might have been included here, but they are of no particular importance, and twenty separate pieces gathered between these covers are indeed the last essays of Joseph Conrad. But there remains a chance that some of his early essays and reviews may still rest undiscovered in the files of old newspapers and weeklies. Conrad had a very uncertain memory for his own work, and I recall that when

the material for "Notes on Life and Letters" was being collected, he was frequently quite vague as to what he had written and where it had appeared. In proof of this, it may be mentioned that the essay entitled "John Galsworthy" in this volume was omitted from the previous one only through Conrad's forgetfulness of its existence. Therefore, as I say, discoveries may yet be made.

In the latter years of his life Conrad occasionally found relief from the toil and exhaustion of more creative work in writing of reminiscent essays, and some of these rank, decidedly, among his finest efforts in this direction. "Last Essays" is just as remarkable a book as "Notes on Life and Letters"; it contains passages of extraordinary charm, serenity, and eloquence. And particular care has been taken to avoid any respect of absolute completeness, as though a dead author's desk had been ransacked for every fragment: all the articles included in this volume have been included for very definite reasons. Nothing has been printed merely for the purpose of adding to the bulk.

For some time Conrad had had the idea of writing a pendent volume to "The Mirror of the Sea," and the unfinished article, "Legends," on which he was at work the day before he died, was, he told me, to have formed part of such a book. And I suspect that 'The Torrens," "Christmas Day at Sea," "Ocean Travel," "Outside Literature." and part, at least, of "Geography and Some Explorers,"

would also have been incorporated in this book, and therefore I have placed them all together at the beginning of the volume. They form, as it were, the shadowy nucleus of projected work.

"Geography and Some Explorers," the second longest essay in this collection, was written as a general introduction to a serial work called "Countries of the World." It appeared as 'The Romance of Travel" in the first number, February, 1924, and was reprinted under its proper title in The National Geographic Magazine, March, 1924. In this fascinating essay, Conrad, after discussing the feats of some of the early navigators and explorers, gives a memorable account of a passage he made in 1888 (when in command of the Otago) through the Torres Straits on a voyage from Sydney to Mauritius.

" The Torrens: A Personal Tribute," was published in The Blue Peter, October, 1923. In the early 'nineties Conrad had been chief officer of this ship — he joined her on November 2, 1891, and left her on October 15,1893 — and he made two journeys from England to Australia and back in that capacity. For her he always retained a warm affection, and when, in the September Blue Peter of 1923, there was issued a coloured illustration of the Torrens, he willingly consented to give a personal remembrance of her in the next number. The last words, in which he describes her end upon the shores of the Mediterranean, posses a rare and pensive beauty, which I recover in the following paragraphs:

"But in the end her body of iron and wood, so fair to look upon, had to be broken up — I hope with fitting reverence; and as I sit here, thirty years, almost to a day, since I last set eyes on her, I love to think that her perfect form found a merciful end on shores of the Sunlit Sea of my boyhood's dreams, and that her fine spirit has returned to dwell in the regions of the great winds, the inspirers and companions of her swift, renowned, sea-tossed life which I, too, have been permitted to share for a little while."

"Christmas Day at Sea" was published in the London Daily Mail on December 24,1923. It was concerned largely with an episode on one Christmas Day during Conrad's first voyage to Australian in the Duke of Sutherland in 1879, where he served as an A.B.

"Ocean Travel" made its first appearance in the London Evening News of May 15,1923, where it was named "My Hotel in Mid-Atlantic." It was written during Conrad's voyage to America in the Tuseania in the spring of that year, and was posted to me the moment he arrived in New York. It compares the old and the new life at sea, and needless to say, the vote of affection in given for the old.

"Outside Literature," short essay dealing with the subject of notices to mariners, appeared under the title "Notices to Mariners" in the Manchester Guardian of December 4, 1922, and under its proper title in the American Bookman of February, 1923.

"Legends," as I have mentioned, was the last article Conrad ever wrote; it was left unfinished upon his desk. It tells, with a strain of melancholy, of the breed of seamen who have disappeared with the disappearance of sailing ships, and was printed, less than a fortnight after Conrad's death, in the London Daily Mail of August 15, 1924.

Next follow two essays which have the war at sea as background. "The Unlighted Coasf recalls Conrad's experiences in the North Sea during his ten days' cruise in the Ready in 1917 — a full account of this cruise is to be found in Captain Sutherland's "At Sea with Joseph Conrad" — and was written for the Admirably. For some reason or other they never used it and it first saw the light in the London Times of August 18,1925.

The Dover Patrol," written at the request of the late Lord Northcliffe, was published in the London Timeso\ July 27,1921, the day on which the Prince of Wales unveiled the Dover Patrol Memorial. It is glowing tribute to "the physical endurance, the inborn seamanship, the matter-of-fact, industrious, indefatigable enthusiasm" of the men who guarded unsleepingly and at extreme hazard the entrance to the Channel.

The "Memorandum on the Scheme for Fitting Out a Sailing Ship" is here first printed. Written in 1919 for the Holt Steamship Company, who had proposed to fit out a sailing ship for the training of boys destined for the Mercantile Marine, it is an example of Conrad's intense and practical interest in such subjects. It is exactly what it purports to be — a memorandum, precise, technical, full of

his accumulated experience and long-pondered ideas. Nothing came of the scheme: as Mr. Lawrence Holt wrote to me, it was "abandoned owing to the depression of trade which set in soon after my conversation with Mr. Conrad." The document from then to now has been in Mr. Holt's possession, and cordial thanks are due to him for his permission to use it here.

"The Loss of the Daigonaf is a further example of Conrad's interest in questions of seamanship. Indeed, I print it solely for that reason, because, in itself, it but refers to the contents of an article from another pen. It appeared, as a letter to the editor, in the London Mercury of December, 1921, and was called forth by a paper in the September issue entitled "A True Story: Log and Record of the Wreck of the Snip Dalgonaro\ Liverpool, bound from Callao to Taltal." This paper described the wreck of the barque Loire, which happened in October, 1913; and Conrad's letter, while correcting some obvious mistakes in the narrative as printed, is a testimony to the gallantry and efficiency of the officers and crew.

The essay calied "Travel" was written, I am proud to think, out of friendship for myself and formed the preface to a book by me, "Into the East: Notes on Burma and Malaya," 1923. The effort to finish "The Rover" held up the writing of this preface for about a year, but it seems to me that in its evocation of the great travellers of old and of times that have gone for ever it reaches the highest beauty and distinction. Let me quote one paragraph:

"And those things, which stand as if imperishable in the pages of old books of travel, are all blown away; have vanished as utterly as the smoke of the travellers' camp fires in the icy night air of the Gobi Desert, as the smell of incense burned in the temples of strange gods, as the voices of Asiatic statesmen speculating with the cruel wisdom of past ages on matters of peace and war."

"Stephen Crane," the longest and most elaborate essay in the book, was written as an introduction to Mr. Thomas Beer's "Stephen Crane, a Study in American Letters," 1923. Conrad, as in generally known, was a close friend of Crane during the last years of that meteoric life, when Crane was frequently a neighbour of his in southern England. In all, he wrote three essays on Crane and his

work. One appeared in "Notes on Life and Letters," two are printed in this volume, and all breathe a spirit of affectionate admiration. This essay is a study in biographical sidelights and is undoubtedly the most personal and the most delightful of all reminiscences of Crane.

The short essay. "His War Book," which follows, was composed specifically as a preface to a new edition of Crane's best-known work, "The Red Badge of Courage" — the new edition came out at last in 1925 — and it gives clear indication of Conrad's feeling for the artist who could observe so truly and create with such economy.

"John Galsworthy," as I have said, was only accidentally omitted from the previous volume of Conrad's essays. It was composed as a review of "A Man of Property," contained in a wider study of the author, and was published in the London outlookoi March 31,1906, under the title of "A Middle Class Family." A few years before he died, Conrad rectified, as far as he could, his oversight by privately

printing about fifty copies of this essay, and he would certainly have included it in any future volume of essays.

The next piece, "A Glance at Two Books," dealing with Galsworthy's "The Island Pharisees" and Hudson's "Green Mansions," dates from even earlier and was done in 1904. Written obviously in answer to an editorial request, it was, for reasons unknown, never used, and the typescript, being found among Conrad's papers, was first printed in T.P.'s and Cassell's Weekly of August 1, 1925.

A "Preface to his Shorter Tales" was written at the instigation of his American publishers to introduce "The Shorter Tales of Joseph Conrad," and the essay, like the selection, has never appeared in England. It was one of his last completed pieces — the volume was issued after his death in 1924 — and it throws a reminiscent glance upon the ideas that animated his work and upon his writing life.

The little not, "Cookery" charming in its playful fancy, was a send-off to his wife's book, "A Handbook of Cookery for a Small House," 1922. I include it here for the sake of its association and for the unique quality of its tone.

The next two pieces, both of them letters, give glimpses of

Conrad's abiding interest in international questions and the affairs of Europe. He was always a student of foreign politics, a student fortified by an impressive historical sense and by a great knowledge of continental problems throughout the centuries and these two letters, with their combined eloquence and hold upon reality, throw light upon an aspect of Conrad's mind of which few people are aware.

The first letter, an appeal for a free Constantinople under the protection of the Powers, was published in the London Times of November 7,1912, when the Balkman States were at war with Turkey and their armies already within striking distance of her capital.

The second letter, written evidently a few days later to an untraceable correspondent — a typescript only was found — who had criticized his printed observations, is an amplification of the previous letter.

Finally comes 'The Congo Diary," a reprint of the diary kept by Conrad in the Congo in 1890, which was first published in The Blue Peter; October, 1925, and then in The Yale Review, January, 1926. This diary calls for its own introduction and a series of explanatory notes, and these will be found with it at the end of the book.

Here, then, are the twenty pieces which compose this volume of "Last Essays." They show as clearly as did the contents of "Notes on Life and Letters" the rich diversity of Conrad's mind, his powers of cogent argument, of found memory, and of noble expression. His mastery over his chosen material never flagged and these essays are a last witness to his consummate gifts.

RICHARD CURLE.

Geography and Some Explorers

It is safe to say that for the majority of mankind the superiority of geography over geometry lies in the appeal of its figures. It may be an effect of the incorrigible frivolity inherent in human nature, but most of us will agree that a map is more fascinating to look at than a figure in a treatise on conic sections — at any rate for the simple minds which are all the equipment of the majority of the dwellers on this earth.

No doubt a trigonometrical survey may be a romantic undertaking, striding over deserts and leaping over valleys never before trodden by the foot of civilized man; but its accurate operations can never have for us the fascination of the first hazardous steps of a venturesome, often lonely, explorer jotting down by the light of his camp fire the thoughts, the impressions, and the toil of his day.

For a long time yet a few suggestive words grappling with things seen will have the advantage over a long array of precise, no doubt interesting, and even profitable figures. The earth is a stage, and though it may be an advantage, even to the right comprehension of the play, to know its exact configuration, it is the drama of human endeavour that will be the thing, with a ruling passion expressed by outward action marching perhaps blindly to success of failure, which themselves are often undistinguishable from each other at first.

Of all the sciences, geography finds its origin in action, and what is more, in adventurous action of the kind that appeals to sedentary people who like to dream of arduous adventure in the manner of prisoners dreaming behind bars of all the hardships and hazards of liberty dear to the heart of man.

Descriptive geography, like any other kind of science, has been built on the experience of certain phenomena and on experiments prompted by that unappeasable curiosity of men which their intelligence has elevated into a quite respectable passion for acquiring knowledge. Like other sciences it has fought its way to truth through a long errors. It has suffered from the love of the marvellous, from our credulity, from rash and unwarrantable assumptions, from the play of unbridled fancy.

Geography had its phase of circumstantially extravagant speculation which had nothing to do with the pursuit of truth, but has given us a curious glimpse of the mediaeval mind playing in its ponderous childish way with the problems of our earth's shape, its size, its character, its products, its inhabitants. Cartography was almost as pictorial then as are some modern newspapers. It crowded its map with pictures of strange pageants, strange trees, strange beasts, drawn with amazing precision in the midst of theoretically conceived continents. It delineated imaginary kingdoms of Monomotapa and of Prester John, the regions infested by lions or haunted by unicorns, inhabited by men with reversed feet, or eyes in the middle of their breasts.

All this might have been amusing if the mediaeval gravity in the absurd had not been in itself a wearisome thing. But what of that! Has not the key science of modern chemistry passed through its dishonest phase of Alchemy (a portentous development of the confidence trick), and our knowledge of the starry sky been arrived at through the superstitious idealism of Astrology looking for men's fate in the depths of the infinite? Mere megalomania on a colossal scale. Yet, solemn fooling for solemn fooling of the scientific order, I prefer the kind that does not lay itself out to thrive on the fears and the cupidities of men.

From that point of view geography is the most blameless of sciences. Its fabulous phase never aimed at cheating simple mortals (who are a multitude) out of their peace of mind or their money. At the most it has enticed some of them away from their homes; to death may be, now and then to a little disputed glory, not seldom to contumely, never to high fortune. The greatest of them all, who has presented modern geography with a new world to work upon, was at one time loaded with chains and thrown into

prison. Columbus remains a pathetic figure, not a sufferer in the cause of geography, but a victim of the imperfections of jealous human hearts, accepting his fate with resignation. Among explorers he appears lofty in his troubles and like a man of a kingly nature. His contribution to the knowledge of the earth was certainly royal. And if the discovery of America was the occasion of the greatest

outburst of reckless cruelty and greed known to history we may say this at least for it, that the gold of Mexico and Peru, unlike the gold of alchemists, was really there, palpable, yet, as ever, the most elusive of the Fata Morgana that lure men away from their homes, as a moment of reflection will convince any one. For nothing it more certain than that there will never be enough gold to go round, as the Conquistadores found out by experience.

I suppose it is not very charitable of me, but I must say that to this day I feel a malicious pleasure at the many disappointments of those pertinacious searchers for El Dorado who climbed mountains, pushed through forests, swam rivers, floundered in bogs, without giving a single thought to the science of geography. Not for them the serene joys of scientific research, but infinite toil, in hunger, thirst: sickness, battle; with broken heads, unseemly squabbles, and empty pockets in the end. I cannot help thinking it served them right. It is an ugly tale, which has not much to do with the service of geography. The geographical knowledge of our day is of the kind that would have been beyond the conception of the hardy followers of Cortes and Pizaro; and of that most estimable of Conquerors who was called Cabeza de Vaca, who was high-minded and dealt humanely with the heathen nations whose territories he traversed in search of one more El Dorado. It is said they loved him greatly, but now the very memory of those nations is gone from the earth, while their territories, which they could not take with them, are being traversed many times every twenty-four hours by the trains of the Southern Pacific railroad.

The discovery of the New World marks the end of the fabulous geography, and it must be owned that the history of the Conquest contains at least one great moment — I mean a geographically great moment — when Vasco Nunez de Balboa, while crossing the Isthmus of Panama, set his eyes for the first time upon the ocean, the immensity of which he did not suspect, and which in his elation he named the Pacific. It is anything but that; but the privileged Conquistador cannot be blamed for surrendering to his first impression.

The Gulf of Panama, which is what he really saw with that first

glance, is one of the calmest spots on the waters of the globe. Too calm. The old navigators dreaded it as a dangerous region where one might be caught and lie becalmed for weeks with one's crew dying slowly of thirst under a cloudless sky. The worst of fates, this, to feel yourself die in a long and helpless agony. How much preferable a region of storms where man and ship can at least put up a fight and remain defiant almost to the last.

I must not be understood to mean that a tempest at sea is a delightful experience, but I would rather face the fiercest tempest than a gulf pacific even to deadliness, a prison-house for incautious caravels and a place of torture for their crews. But Balboa was charmed with its serene aspect. He did not know where he was. He probably thought himself within a stone's throw, as it were, of the Indies and Cathay. Or did he perhaps, like a man touched with grace, have a moment of exalted vision, the awed feeling that what he was looking at was an abyss of waters comparable in its extent to the view of the unfathomable firmament, and sown all over with groups of islands resembling the constellations of the sky?

But whatever spiritual glimpse of the truth he might have had, Balboa could not possibly know that this great moment of his life had added suddenly thousands of miles to the circumference of the globe, had opened an immense theatre for the human drama of adventure and exploration, a field for the missionary labours of, mainly, Protestant churches, and spread an enormous canvas on which armchair geographers could paint the most fanciful variants of their pet theory of a great southern continent.

I will not quarrel with the post-Columbian cartographers for their wild but, upon the whole, interesting inventions. The provocation to let one's self go was considerable. Geography militant, which had succeeded the geography fabulous, did not seem able to accept the idea that there was much more water than land on this globe. Nothing could satisfy their sense of the fitness of things but an enormous

extent of solid earth which they placed in that region of the South where, as a matter of fact, the great white-crested seas of stormy latitudes will be free to chase each other all round the globe to the end of time. I suppose their landsmen's temperament stood in the

way of their recognition that the world of geography, so far as the apportioning of space goes, seems to have been planned mostly for the convenience of fishes.

What is surprising to me is that the seaman of the time should have really believed that the large continents to the north of the Equator demanded, as a matter of good art or else of sound science, to be balanced by corresponding masses of land in the southern hemisphere. They were simple souls. The chorus of armchair people all singing the same tune made them blind to the many plain signs of a great open sea. Every bit of coast-line discovered, every mountain-top glimpsed in the distance, had to be dragged loyally into the scheme of the Terra Australis Incognita.

Even Tasman, the best seaman of them all before James Cook, the most, accomplished of seventeenth-century explorers and navigators that went forth to settle the geography of the Pacific — even Tasman, after coming unexpectedly upon the North Island of New Zealand, and lingering long enough there to chart roughly a bit of the coast and lose a boat's crew in a sudden affray with the Maoris, seemed to take it for granted that this was the western limit of an enormous continent extending away towards the point of South America.

Mighty is the power of theory, especially if based on such a common-sense notion as the balance of continents. And it must be remembered that it is difficult for us now to realize not only the navigational dangers of unknown seas, but the awful geographical incertitudes of the first explorers in that new world of waters.

Tasman's journal, which was published not so very long ago, gives us some idea of their perplexing difficulties. The early navigators had no means of ascertaining their exact position on the globe. They could calculate their latitude, but the problem of longitude was a matter which bewildered their minds and often falsified their judgment. It had to be a matter of pure guesswork. Tasman and his officers, when they met on board the Heemskirk; anchored in Murderers' Bay, to consider their further course in the light of their instructions, did not know where any of the problematic places named in their instructions were, neither did they know where they

themselves were.

Tasman might have sailed north or east, but in the end he decided to sail between the two, and, circling about, returned to Batavia, where he was received coldly by his employers, the honourable governor-general and the council in Batavia. Their final judgment was that Abel Tasman was a skilful navigator, but that he had himself "remiss" in his investigations, and that he had been guilty of leaving certain problems unsolved.

We are told that Tasman did not expect this armchair criticism; and indeed, even now, it seems surprising to an unprejudiced mind. It was the voyage during which, among other things, Tasman discovered the island by which his names lives on the charts, took first contact with New Zealand (which was not seen again till 130 years afterwards), sailed over many thousands of miles of uncharted seas, bringing back with him a journal which was of much value afterwards for his exploring successors.

It may be he was hurt by the verdict of the honourable council, but he does not seem to have been cast down by it, for it appears that shortly afterwards he asked for a rise of salary — and, what is still more significant, he got it. He was obviously a valuable servant, but I am sorry to say that this character as a man not of the kind to cause governors and councils to treat him with particular consideration. Expect in professional achievement he is not comparable to Captain Cook, a humble son of the soil like himself, but a modest man of genius, the familiar associate of the most learned in the land, medallist of the Royal Society, and a captain in the Royal Navy.

But there was a taint of an unscrupulous adventurer in Tasman. It is certain that at various times his patron, the Governor Anthony van Diemen, and the honourable council in Batavia, had employed him in some shady transactions of their own, connected with the Japan trade. There is also no doubt

that once he had, on his own responsibility, kidnapped an influential Chinaman who stood in the way of some business negotiation Tasman was conducting with the Sultan of Achin.

The Chinaman may have been a worthless person, but one

wonders what happened to him in the end; and, in any case, the proceeding is open to criticism. Then in his old age he got into some disreputable scrape which caused the congregation with which he worshipped to ask him to resign his membership. Even the honourable council was startled, and dismissed him from his employment, though characteristically enough not actually from their service. This action of the council fixes the character of the man better than any scandalous story. He was valuable, but compromising.

All these regrettable details came to my knowledge quite recently in a very amusing and interesting book, but I must confess that my early admiration for Tasman as one of the early fathers of militant geography has not been affected very much by it. Remiss or not, he had in the course of his voyages mapped 8,000 miles of an island which by common consent is called now a continent, a geologically very old continent indeed, but which is now the home of a very young commonwealth with all the possibilities of material and intellectual splendour still hidden in its future.

I like to think that in that portion of the Elysian Fields set apart for great navigators, James Cook would not refuse to acknowledge the civilities of Abel Tasman, a fellow seaman who had first reported the existence of New Zealand in the perplexed, bewildered way of those times, 130 years before Captain Cook on his second voyage laid for ever the ghost of the Terra Australis Incognita and added New Zealand to the scientific domain of the geography triumphant of our day.

No shade of remissness nor doubtful motive rests upon the achievements of Captain Cook, who came out of a labourer's cottage to take his place at the head of the masters of maritime exploration who worked at the great geographical problem of the Pacific. Enc/eavourwas the name of the ship which carried him on his first voyage, and it was also the watchword of his professional life. Resolutionw&s the name of the ship he commanded himself on his second expedition, and it was the determining quality of his soul. I will not say that it was the greatest, because he had all the other manly qualities of a great man.

The voyages of the early explorers were prompted by an

acquisitive spirit, the idea of lucre in some form, the desire of trade or the desire of loot, disguised in more or less fine words. But Cook's three voyages are free from any taint of that sort. His aims needed no disguise. They were scientific. His deeds speak for themselves with the masterly simplicity of a hard-won success. In that respect he seems to belong to the single-minded explorers of the nineteenth century, the late fathers of militant geography whose only object was the search for truth. Geography is a science of facts, and they devoted themselves to the discovery of facts in the configuration and features of the main continents.

It was the century of landsmen investigators. In saying this I do not forget the polar explorers, whose aims were certainly as pure as the air of those high latitudes where not a few of them laid down their lives for the advancement of geography. Seaman, men of science, it is difficult to speak of them without admirative emotion. The dominating figure among the seaman explorers of the first half of the nineteenth century is that of another good man, Sir John Franklin, whose fame rests not only on the extent of his discoveries, but on professional prestige and high personal character. This great navigator, who never returned home, served geography even in his death. The persistent efforts extending over ten years to ascertain his fate advanced greatly our knowledge of the polar regions.

As gradually revealed to the world this fate appeared the more tragic in this, that for the first two years the way of the Erebus and 7e/-/o/-expedition seemed to be the way of the desired and important success, while in truth it was all the time the way of death, the end of the darkest drama perhaps played behind the curtain of Arctic mystery.

The last words unveiling the mystery of the Erebus and Terror expedition were brought home and disclosed to the world by Sir Leopold McClintock, in his book, "The Voyage of the Far in the Arctic Seas." It is a little book, but it records with manly simplicity the tragic ending of a great tale. It so

happened that I was born in the year of its publication. Therefore, I may be excused for not getting hold of it till ten years afterwards. I can only account for it falling into my hands by the fact that the fate of Sir John Franklin

was a matter of European interest, and that Sir Leopold McClintock's book was translated, I believe, into every language of the white races.

My copy was probably in French. But I have read the work many times since. I have now on my shelves a copy of a popular edition got up exactly as I remember my first one. It contains the touching facsimile of the printed form filled in with a summary record of the two ships' work, the name of "Sir John Franklin commanding the expedition" written in ink, and the pathetic underlined entry "All well." It was found by Sir Leopold McClintock under a cairn and it is dated just a year before the two ships had to be abandoned in their deadly ice-trap, and their crews' long and desperate struggle for life began.

There could hardly have been imagined a better book for letting in the breath of the stern romance of polar exploration into the existence of a boy whose knowledge of the poles of the earth had been till then of an abstract formal kind as mere imaginary ends of the imaginary axis upon which the earth turns. The great spirit of the realities of the story sent me off on the romantic explorations of my inner self; to the discovery of the taste of poring over maps; and revealed to me the existence of a latent devotion to geography which interfered with my devotion (such as it was) to my other schoolwork.

Unfortunately, the marks awarded for that subject were almost as few as the hours apportioned to it in the school curriculum by persons of no romantic sense for the real, ignorant of the great possibilities of active life; with no desire for struggle, no notion of the wide spaces of the world — mere bored professors, in fact, who were not only middle-aged but looked to me as if they had never been young. And their geography was very much like themselves, a bloodless thing with a dry skin covering a repulsive armature of uninteresting bones.

I would be ashamed of my warmth in digging up a hatchet which has been buried now for nearly fifty years if those fellows had not tried so often to take my scalp at the yearly examinations. There are things that one does not forget. And besides, the geography which I had discovered for myself was the geography of open spaces

and wide horizons built up on men's devoted work in the open air, the geography still militant but already conscious of its approaching end with the death of the last great explorer. The antagonism was radical.

Thus it happened that I got no marks at all for my first and only paper on Arctic geography, which I wrote at the age of thirteen. I still think that for my tender years it was an erudite performance. I certainly did know something of Arctic geography, but what I was after really, I suppose, was the history of Arctic exploration. My knowledge had considerable gaps but I managed to compress my enthusiasm into just two pages, which in itself was a sort of merit. Yet I got no marks. For one thing it was not a set subject. I believe the only comment made about it to my private tutor was that I seemed to have been wasting my time in reading books of travel instead of attending to my studies. I tell you, those fellows were always trying to take my scalp. On another occasion I just saved it by proficiency in map-drawing. It must have been good, I suppose; but all I remember about it is that it was done in a loving spirit.

I have no doubt that star-gazing is a fine occupation, for it leads you within the borders of the unattainable. But map-gazing to which I became addicted so early, brings the problems of the great spaces of the earth into stimulating and directing contact with same curiosity and gives an honest precision to one's imaginative faculty. And the honest maps of the nineteenth century nourished in me a passionate interest in the truth of geographical facts and a desire for precise knowledge which was extended later to other subjects.

For a change had come over the spirit of cartographers. From the middle of the eighteenth century on the business of map-marking had been growing into an honest occupation, registering the hard-won knowledge, but also in a scientific spirit recording the geographical ignorance of its time. And it was Africa, the continent out of which the Romans used to say some new thing was always coming, that got cleared of the dull imaginary wonders of the dark age, which were replaced by exciting spaces of white

paper. Regions unknown! My imagination could depict to itself there worthy, adventurous and devoted men, nibbling at the edges, attacking from north and south

and east and west, conquering a bit of truth here and a bit of truth there, and sometimes swallowed up by the mystery their hearts were so persistently set on unveiling.

Among them Mungo Park, of western Sudan and Bruce, of Abyssinia, were, I believe, the first friends I made when I began to take notice — I mean geographical notice — of the continents of the world into which I was born. The fame of these two had already been for a long time European, and their figures had become historical by then. But their story was a very novel thing to me, for the very latest geographical news that could have been whispered to me in my cradle was that of the expedition of Burton and Speke, the news of the existence of Tanganyika and of Victoria Nyanza.

I stand here confessed as a contemporary of the Great Lakes. Yes, I could have heard of their discovery in my cradle, and it was only right that, grown to a boy's estate, I should have in the later sixties done my first bit of map-drawing and paid my first homage to the prestige of their first explorers. It consisted in entering labouriously in pencil the outline of Tanganyika on my beloved old atlas, which, having been published in 1852, knew nothing, of course, of the Great Lakes. The heart of its Africa was white and big.

Surely it could have been nothing but a romantic impulse which prompted the idea of bringing it up to date with all the accuracy of which I was capable. Thus I could imagine myself stepping in the very footprints of geographical discovery. And it was not all wasted time. As a bit of prophetic practice it was not bad for me. Many years afterwards, as second officer in the Merchant Sen/ice, it was my duty to correct and bring up to date the charts of more than one ship, according to the Admiralty notices. I did this work conscientiously and with a sense of responsibility; but it was not in the nature of things that I should ever recapture the excitement of that entry of Tanganyika on the bank of my old atlas.

It must not be supposed that I gave up my interest in the polar regions. My heart and my warm participation swung from the frigid to the torrid zone, fascinated by the problems of each, no doubt, but more yet by the men who, like masters of a great art, worked each according to his temperament to complete the picture of the earth.

Almost each day of my schoolboy life had its hour given up to their company. And to this day I think that it was a very good company.

Not the least interesting part in the study of geographical discovery lies in the insight it gives one into the characters of that special kind of men who devoted the best part of their lives to the exploration of land and sea. In the world of mentality and imagination which I was entering it was they and not the characters of famous fiction who were my first friends. Of some of them I had soon formed for myself an image indissolubly connected with certain parts of the world. For instance, western Sudan, of which I could draw the rivers and principal features from memory even now, means for me an episode in Mungo Park's life.

It means for me the vision of a young, emaciated, fair-haired man, clad simply in a tattered shirt and worn-out breeches, gasping painfully for breath and lying on the ground in the shade of an enormous African tree (species unknown), while from a neighbouring village of grass huts a charitable black-skinned woman is approaching him with a calabash full of pure cold water, a simple draught which, according to himself, seems to have effected a miraculous cure. The central Sudan, on the other hand, is represented to me by a very different picture, that of a self-confident and keen-eyed person in a long cloak and wearing a turban on his head, riding slowly towards a gate in the mud walls of an African city, from which an excited population is streaming out to behold the wonder — Doctor Barth, the protege of Lord Palmerston, and subsidized by the British Foreign Office, approaching Kano, which no European eye had seen till then, but where forty years later my friend Sir Hugh Clifford, the Governor of Nigeria, travelled in state in order to open a college.

I must confess that I read that bit of news and inspected the many pictures in the illustrated papers without any particular elation. Education is a great thing, but Doctor Barth gets in the way. Neither will the monuments left by all sorts of empire builders suppress for me the memory of David Livingstone.

The words "Central Africa" bring before my eyes an old man with a rugged, kind face and a clipped, gray moustache, pacing wearily at the head of a few black followers along the reed-fringed lakes towards the dark native hut

on the Congo headwaters in which he died, clinging in his very last hour to his heart's unappeased desire for the sources of the Nile.

That passion had changed him in his last days from a great explorer into a restless wanderer refusing to go home any more. From his exalted place among the blessed of militant geography and with his memory enshrined in Westminister Abbey, he can well afford to smile without bitterness at the fatal delusion of his exploring days, a notable European figure and the most venerated perhaps of all objects of my early geographical enthusiasm.

Once only did that enthusiasm expose me to the derision of my schoolboy chums. One day, putting my finger on a spot in the very middle of the then white heart of Africa, I declared that some day I would go there. My chums' chaffing was perfectly justifiable. I myself was ashamed of having been betrayed into mere vapouring. Nothing was further from my wildest hopes. Yet it is a fact that, about eighteen years afterwards, a wretched little stern-wheel steamboat I commanded lay moored to the bank of an African river.

Everything was dark under the stars. Every other white man on board was asleep. I was glad to be alone on deck, smoking the pipe of peace after an anxious day. The subdued thundering mutter of the Stanley Falls hung in the heavy night air of the last navigable reach of the Upper Congo, while no more than ten miles away, in Reshid's camp just above the Falls, the yet unbroken power of the Congo Arabs slumbered uneasily. Their day was over. Away in the middle of the stream, on a little island nestling all back in the foam of the broken water, a solitary little light glimmered feebly, and I said to myself with awe, 'This is the very spot of my boyish boast."

A great melancholy descended on me. Yes, this was the very spot. But there was no shadowy friend to stand by my side in the night of the enormous wilderness, no great haunting memory, but only the unholy recollection of a prosaic newspaper "stunt" and the distasteful knowledge of the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience and geographical exploration. What an end to the idealized realities of a boy's daydreams! I wondered what I was doing there, for indeed it was only an unforeseen episode, hard to believe in now, in my seaman's life. Still, the fact, remains

that I have smoked a pipe of peace at midnight in the very heart of the African continent, and felt very lonely there.

But never so at sea. There I never felt lonely, because there I never lacked company. The company of great navigators, the first grown-up friends of my early boyhood. The unchangeable sea preserves for one the sense of its past, the memory of things accomplished by wisdom and daring among its restless waves. It was those things that commanded my profoundest loyalty, and perhaps it is by the professional favour of the great navigators ever present to my memory that, neither explorer nor scientific navigator, I have been permitted to sail through the very heart of the old Pacific mystery, a region which even in my time remained very imperfectly charted and still remote from the knowledge of men.

It was in 1888, when in command of a ship loading in Sydney a mixed cargo for Mauritius, that, one day, all of a sudden, all the deep-lying historic sense of the exploring adventures in the Pacific surged up to surface of my being. Almost without reflection I sat down and wrote a letter to my owners suggesting that, instead of the usual southern route, I should take the ship to Mauritius by way of Torres Strait. I ought to have received a severe rap on the knuckles, if only for wasting their time in submitting such an unheard-of proposition.

I must say I awaited with some trepidation. It came in due course, but instead of beginning with the chiding words, "We fail to understand," etc., etc., it simply called my attention in the first paragraph to the fact that "there would be an additional insurance premium to pay for that route," and so on, and so on. And it ended like this: "Upon the whole, however, we have no objection to your taking the ship through Torres Strait if you are certain that the season is not too far advanced to endanger the success of your passage by the calms which, as you know, prevail at times in the Arafura Sea."

I read, and in my heart I felt compunctious. The season was somewhat advanced. I had not been scrupulously honest in my argumentation. Perhaps it was because I never expected it to be effective. And here it was all felt to my responsibility. My letter must

have struck a lucky day in Messrs. H. Simpson & Sons' offices — a romantic day. I won't pretend that I regret my lapse from strict honesty, for what would the memory of my sea life have been for me if it had not included a passage through Torres Strait, in its fullest extent, from the mouth of the great Fly River right on along the track of the early navigators.

The season being advanced, I insisted on leaving Sydney during a heavy southeast gale. Both the pilot and the tug-master were scandalized by my obstinacy, and they hastened to leave me to my own devices while still inside Sydney Heads. The fierce southeaster caught me up on its wings, and no later than the ninth day I was outside the entrance of Torres Strait, named after the undaunted and reticent Spaniard who, in the seventeenth century, first sailed that way without knowing where he was, without suspecting he had New Guinea on one side of him and the whole solid Australian continent on the other — he thought he was passing through an archipelago — the Strait whose existence for a century and a half had been doubted, argued about, squabbled over by geographers, and even denied by the disreputable but skilful navigator, Abel Tasman, who thought it was a large bay, and whose true contours were first laid down on the map by James Cook, the navigator without fear and without reproach, the greatest in achievement and character of the later seamen fathers of militant geography. If the dead haunt the scenes of their earthly exploits, then I must have been attended benevolently by those three shades — the inflexible Spaniard of such lofty spirit that in his report he disdains to say a single word about the appalling hardships and dangers of his passages; the pigheaded Hollander who, having made up his mind that there was no passage there, missed the truth by only fifty miles or so; and the great Englishman, a son of the soil, a great commander and a great professionai seaman, who solved that question among many others and left no unsolved problems of the Pacific behind him. Great shades! All friends of my youth!

It was not without a certain emotion that, commanding very likely the first, and certainly the last, merchant ship that carried a cargo that way — from Sydney to Mauritius — I put her head at

daybreak for Bligh's Entrance, and packed on her every bit of canvas she could carry. Windswept, sunlit empty waters were all around me, half-veiled by a brilliant haze. The first thing that caught my eye upon the play of green whitecapped waves was a black marking conveniently the end of low sandbank. It looked like the wreck of some small vessel.

I altered the course slightly in order to pass close, with the hope of being able to read the letters on her stern. They were already faded. Her name was Honolulu. The name of the port I could not make out. The story of her life is known by now to God alone, and the winds must have drifted long ago around her remains a quiet grave of the very sand on which she had died. Thirtysix hours afterwards, of which about nine were spent at anchor, approaching the other end of the Strait, I sighted a gaunt, gray wreck of a big American ship lying high and dry on the southermost of the Warrior Reefs. She had been there for years. I had heard of her. She was legendary. She loomed up, a sinister and enormous memento mori raised by the refraction of this serene afternoon above the far-away line of the horizon drawn under the sinking sun.

And thus I passed out of Torres Strait before the dusk settled on its waters. Just as a clear sun sank ahead of my ship I took a bearing of a little island for a fresh departure, an insignificant crumb of dark earth, lonely, like an advanced sentinel of that mass of broken land and water, to watch the approaches from the side of the Arafura Sea. But to me it was a hallowed spot, for I knew that the Endeavour had been hove to off it in the year 1762 for her captain, whose name was James Cook, to go ashore for half an hour. What he could possibly want to do I cannot imagine. Perhaps only to be alone with his thoughts for a moment. The dangers and the triumphs of exploration and discovery were over for that voyage. All that remained to do was to go home, and perhaps his great and equable soul, tempered in the incessant perils of a long exploration, wanted to commune with itself at the end of its task. It may

be that on this dry crumb of the earth's crust which I was setting by compass he had tasted a moment of perfect peace. I could depict to myself the

famous seaman navigator, a lonely figure in a three-cornered hat and square-skirted laced coat, pacing to and fro slowly on the rocky shore, while in the ship's boat, lying off on her oars, the coxswain kept his eyes open for the slightest sign of the captain's hand.

Thus the sea has been for me a hallowed ground, thanks to those books of travel and discovery which have peopled it with unforgettable shades of the masters in the calling which, in a humble way, was to be mine, too; men great in their endeavour and in hard-won success of militant geography: men who went forth each according to his lights and with varied motives, laudable or sinful, but each bearing in his breast a speak of the sacred fire.

The Torrens: A Personal Tribute

It is one of the pleasant surprises of my accumulated years to be still here when the shade of that beautiful ship is being evoked for a moment by a sea-travel magazine before the eyes of a public which does its sea travelling under very different conditions. Personally I cannot help thinking them not so much improved as needlessly sophisticated. However, that opinion of mine may be wildly wrong. I am not familiar with the demands of the spirit of the age. And, besides, I know next to nothing of sea travel. Even of the people who do that thing I know but few. My two years in the Torrens is my only professional experience of passengers; and though we — officers brought up in strenuous Indiamen and famous wool clippers- — did not think much of passengers, regarding them as derogatory nuisances with delicate feelings which prevented one driving one's ship till all was blue, I will confess that this experience was most fortunate from every point of view, marking the end of my sea life with pleasant memories, new impressions, and precious friendships. The pleasant memories include the excellent ship's companies it was my luck to work with on each of my two voyages. But the Torrens had a fame which attracted the right kind of sailor, and when engaging her crew her chief officer had always a large and promising crowd to pick and choose from. There was in it always a certain proportion of men who had served in her before and were anxious to join again; for apart from her more brilliant qualities, such as her speed and her celebrated good looks (which by them-salves go a long way with a sailor), she was regarded as a "comfortable ship" in a strictly professional sense, which means that she was known to handle easily and to be a good sea boat in heavy weather. I cannot say that during my time in her we ever experienced really heavy weather; but we had the usual assortment of winds, up to M very strong gales" (logbook style), from various directions; and I can testify that, on every point of sailing, the way that ship had of letting big seas slip under her did one's heart good to watch. It resembled so much an exhibition of intelligent grace and unerring skill that it could fascinate even the least seamanlike of our passengers. A passage under sail brings out in the course of days whatever there may be of sea love and sea sense in any individual whose soul is not indissolubly wedded to the pedestrian shore.

There are, of course, degrees of landsmanism — even to the incurable. A gentleman whom we had on board on my first voyage presented an extreme instance of it. It however, trenched upon the morbid in its excessive sea fright, which had its pathetic as well as comic moments. We had not been more that ten days out from Plymouth when he took it into his head that his shattered constitution could not stand the voyage. Note that he had not had as much as an hour of seasickness. He maintained, however, that a few more days at sea would certainly kill him. He was absolutely certain of it, and he pleaded day after day with a persistent agonized earnestness to be put ashore on the first convenient bit of land, which in this case would have been Teneriffe. But it is not so easy for a sailing ship to make an unexpected call without losing much time. Any deviation from a direct course of the voyage (unless in case of actual distress) would have invalidated the ship's insurance. It was not to be thought of, especially as the man looked fit enough and the doctor had reported that he could not find the slightest evidence of organic disease of any sort. I was sorry for my captain. He could not refuse to listen to the man. Neither could he accede to his request. It was absurd. And yet!... who could tell? It became worse when he began to offer progressive bribes up to £300 or more. I don't know why I was called to one of those awful conferences. The even, low flow of argument from those trembling lips impressed me. He exhibited to us his bank passbook to prove that he had the means to buy his life from us. Our doctor stood by in grim silence. The captain looked dead-tried, but kept his temper wonderfully under the implication of callous heartlessness. It was I who could not stand the inconclusive anguish of the situation. It was not so long since I had been neurasthenic myself. At the very next pause I remarked in a loud and cheery tone, "I

suppose I had better get the anchors ready first thing tomorrow." The captain glared at me speechlessly, as well he might. But the effect of the hopeful word "anchors" had an instantaneous soothing effect on our passenger.

As if satisfied that there was at last somebody on his side he was willing to leave it at that. He went out.

I need not say that next day the anchors were not touched. But we sighted Teneriffe at thirty miles off, to windward — a towering and majestic shadow against the sky. Our passenger spent the day leaning over the rail, watching it till it melted away in the dusk. It was the confirmation of a death sentence for him, I suppose. He took it very well.

He gave me the opportunity to admire for many days an exhibition of consistent stoicism. He never repined. He withdrew within himself. Though civil enough when addressed directly, he had very few words to give to anybody — as though his fund of speech had been expended while pleading in vain for his life. But his heart was burning with indignant anger. He went ashore unreadable but unforgiving, without taking notice of any one in the ship. I was the only exception. Poor futile creature as I was, he remembered that I at least had seemed to be "on his side." If I may take an Irishman's privilege, I will say that if he had really died he could not have abhorred the ship and everyone in her more. To have been exposed to live for seventy days under a sentence of death was a soul-searing outrage, and he very properly resented it to the last.

I must say that, in general, our passengers would begin very soon to look thoroughly at home in the ship. Its life was homely enough and far removed from the ideals of the Ritz Hotel. The monotony of the sea is easier to bear than the boredom of the shore, if only because there is no visible remedy and no contrasts at hand to keep discontent alive. The world contains, or contained then, some people who could put up with a sense of peace for three months. The feeling of close confinement in a sailing ship, with her propelling power working in the open air, and with her daily life going on in public sight, and presenting the varied interests of human character and individual exertion, is always less oppressive than in a steamer even many times her size. Besides, in a sailing ship there are neither vibration nor mechanical noises to grow actively wearisome. Another advantage was that the sailing passenger ships of that epoch were never crowded. The cabins of the Torrenshad two berths each, but

they were roomy and not overfumished with all sorts of inadequate contrivances for comfort, so-called. I have seen the cabins of a modern passenger steamship with three or four berths (their very couches being numbered) which were no half as big as ours. Not half as big — in fact, some or our passengers, who seized the opportunity of learning to dance the hornpipe from our boatswain (an agile professor), could pursue their studies in their own rooms. And that art requires for its practice more space than the proverbial swinging of a cat, I can assure you. Much more.

The Torrens was launched in 1875, only a few months after I had managed, after lots of trouble, to launch myself on the waters of the Mediterranean. Thus we began our careers about the same time. From the professional point of view hers was by far the greater success. It began early, and went on growing for fifteen years under the command of Captain H.R. Angell, whose own long career as a ship master was the greatest success of the three. He left her in

1890, and people said that he took his ship's luck away with him. The Torrens certainly lost some of her masts the very next voyage, by one of those sudden accidents for which no man can be made responsible. I joined her a year afterwards, on the 2d of November,

1891, in London, and I ceased to "belong to her," as the saying is (it was a wrench), on the 15th of October, 1893, when, in London Dock, I took a long look from the quay at that last of ships I ever had under my care, and, stepping round the comer of a tall warehouse, parted from her for ever, and at the same time stepped (in merciful ignorance) out of my sea life altogether.

I owed the opportunity of my close association with my famous contemporary to any acquaintance with Captain W.H.Cope, who succeeded Captain H.R. Angell. I had known him some years before, but only slightly, in a social way. I knew that he had been a Conway boy, that he had much varied service in mail boats and in the Hooghly pilot steamer before the command of the Torrens came in his way. But

I had no reason to believe that he remembered me particularly. However, on hearing from his brother that I was ashore, he sent me word that the Torrens wanted a chief officer, as a matter that might interest me. I was then recovering slowly from a bad breakdown,

after a most unpleasant and persistent tropical disease which I had caught in Africa while commanding a steamer on the River Congo. Yet the temptation was great. I confessed to him by doubts of my fitness for the post, from the point of view of health. But he said that moping ashore never did any one any good, and was very encouraging. It was clear that, as the saying goes, "my looks did not pity me," for he argued that, so far as appearance went, there did not seem to be anything the matter with me. And I suppose I could never have been half as neurasthenic as our poor passenger who wanted to be put ashore, for I lasted out for two voyages, as my discharge prove, though Mr. Basil Lubbock, in his book, 'The Colonial Clippers," credits me with only one. But in the end I had to go (and even stay) ashore. Thus my famous contemporary outlived me at sea by many years, and if she had perhaps a harder life of it than I, it was at least untinged with unavailing regrets; and she escaped the ignominious fate of being laid up as a coal hulk, which so many of her sisters had to suffer. Mr. Lubbock, who can put so much interesting knowledge and right feeling into his studies of our merchant ships, calls her "The Wonderful Torrens." She was! Her fascinations and virtues have made their marks on the hearts of men. Only last year I received a letter from a young able seaman, whom I remembered having in my watch, invoking confidently her unforgotten name. "I feel sure you must be Mr. Conrad, the chief officer, in whose watch I was when serving in the Torrens 'xw 1891, and so I venture to write to you. ..." A friendly, quiet, middle-aged seaman's letter, which gave me the greatest pleasure. And I know of a retired sailor (a Britisher, I suppose), in Massachusetts, who is making a model in loving memory of her who, all her life, was so worthy of men's loyal service. I am sorry I had no time to go to see him, and to gaze at the pious work of his hands.

It is touching to read in Mr. Lubbock's book that, after her transfer to the Italian flag, when she was taken to Genoa to be broken up, the Genoese shipwrights were so moved by the beauty of her lines and the perfections of her build that they had no heart to break her up. They went to work instead to preserve her life for a few more years. A true labour of love, if ever there was one!

But in the end her body of iron and wood, so fair to look upon, had to be broken up — I hope with fitting reverence; and as I sit here, thirty years, almost to a day, since I last set eyes on her, I love to think that her perfect form found a merciful end on the shores of the sunlit sea of my boyhood's dreams, and that her fine spirit has returned to dwell in the regions of the great winds, the inspirers and the companions of her swift, renowned, sea-tossed life, which I, too, have been permitted to share for a little while.

Christmas Day at Sea

Theologically Christmas Day is the greatest occasion for rejoicing offered to sinful mankind; but this aspect of it is so august and so great that the human mind refuses to contemplate it steadily, perhaps because of its own littleness, for which of course it is in no way to blame. It prefers to concentrate its attention on ceremonial observances, expressive generally of good will and festivity, such, for instance, as giving presents and eating plum-puddings. It may be said at once here that from that conventional point of view the spirit of Christmas Day at sea appears distinctly weak. The opportunities, the materials too, are lacking. Of course, the ship's company get a plum-pudding of some sort, and when the captain appears on deck for the first time the officer of the morning watch greets him with a "Merry Christmas, sir," in a tone only moderately effusive. Anything more would be, owing to the difference in station, not correct. Normally he may expect a return for this in the shape of a "The same to you" of a nicely graduated heartiness. He does not get it always, however.

One Christmas morning, many years ago (I was young then and anxious to do the correct thing), my conventional greeting was met by a grimly scathing "Look like it, doesn't it?" from my captain. Nothing more. A three-days' more or less thick weather had turned frankly into a dense fog, and I had him called according to orders. We were in the chops of the Channel, with the Scilly Islands on a vague bearing within thirty miles of us, and not a breath of wind anywhere. There the ship remained wrapped up in a damp blanket and as motionless as a post stuck right in the way of the wretched steamboats groping blindly in and out of the Channel. I felt I had behaved tactlessly; yet how rude it would have been to have withheld the season's greetings from my captain!

It is very difficult to know what is the right thing to do when one is young. I suffered exceedingly from my gaucherie; but imagine my disgust when in less than half an hour we had the narrowest possible escape from a collision with a steamer which, without the slightest warning sound, appeared like a vague dark blot in the fog

on our bow. She only took on the shape of a ship as the passed within twenty yards of the end of our jibboom, terrifying us with the furious screeching of her whistle. Her form melted into nothing, long before the end of the beastly noise, but I hope that her people heard the simultaneous yell of execration from thirty-six throats which we sent after her by way of a Christmas greeting. Nothing more at variance with the spirit of peace and good will could be imagined; and I must add that I never saw a whole ship's company get so much affected by one of the "close calls" of the sea. We remained jumpy all the morning and consumed our Christmas puddings at noon with restless eyes and straining ears as if under the shadow of some impending marine calamity or other.

On shore, of course, a calamity at Christmas time would hardly take any other shape than that of an avalanche — avalanche of unpaid bills. I think that it is the absence of that kind of danger which makes Christmas at sea agreeable on the whole. An additional charm consists in there being no worry about presents. Presents ought to be unexpected things. The giving and receiving of presents at appointed times seems to me a hypocritical ceremony, like exchanging gifts of Dead Sea fruit in proof of sham good-fellowship. But the sea of which I write here is a live sea; the fruits one chances to gather on it may be salt as tears or bitter as death, but they never taste like ashes in the mouth.

In all my twenty years of wandering over the restless waters of the globe I can only remember one Christmas Day celebrated by a present given and received. It was, in my view, a proper live-sea transaction, no offering of Dead Sea fruit; and in its unexpectedness perhaps worth recording. Let me tell you first that it happened in the year 1879, long before there was any thought of wireless message, and when an inspired person trying to prophesy broadcasting would have been regarded as a particularly

offensive nuisance and probably sent to a rest-cure home. We used to call them madhouses then, in our rude, cave-man way.

The daybreak of Christmas Day in the year 1879 was fine. The sun began to shine sometimes about four o'clock over the sombre expanse of the Southern Ocean in latitude 51; and shortly afterwards

a sail was sighted ahead. The wind was light, but a heavy swell was running. Presently, I wished a "Merry Christmas" to my captain. He looked still sleepy, but amiable. I reported the distant sail to him and ventured the opinion that there was something wrong with her. He said, "Wrong?" in an incredulous tone. I pointed out that she had all her upper sails furled and that she was brought to the wind, which, in that region of the world, could not be accounted for on any other theory. He took the glasses from me, directed them towards her stripped masts resembling three Swedish safety matches, flying up and down and waggling to and fro ridiculously in that heaving and austere wilderness of countless water-hills, and returned them to me without a word. He only yawned. This marked display of callousness gave me a shock. In those days I was generally inexperienced and still a comparative stranger in that particular region of the world of waters.

The captain, as is a captain's way, disappeared from the decks; and after a time our carpenter came up the poop ladder carrying an empty small wooden keg, of the sort in which certain ship's provisions are packed. I said, surprised, "What do you mean by lugging this thing up here, Chips?" — "Captain's orders, sir," he explained shortly.

I did not like to question him further, and so we only exchanged Christmas greetings and he went away. The next person to speak to me was the steward. He came running up the companion stairs: "Have you any old newspapers in your room, sir?"

We had left Sydney, N.S.W., eighteen days before. There were several old Sydney Heralds, Telegraphs, Bulletins in my cabin, besides a few new home papers received by the last mail. "Why do you ask, steward?" I inquired naturally. "The captain would like to have them," he said.

And even then I did not understand the inwardness of these eccentricities. I was only lost in astonishment at them. It was eight o'clock before we had closed with that ship, which, under her short canvas and heading nowhere in particular, seemed to be loafing aimlessly on the very threshold of the gloomy home of storms. But long before that hour I had learned from the number of the boats she carried that this nonchalant ship was a whaler. She was the first

whaler I had ever seen. She had hoisted the Stars and Stripes at her peak, and her signal flags had told us already that her name was: "Alaska — two years our from New York — east from Honolulu — two hundred and fifteen days on the cruising ground."

We passed, sailing slowly, within a hundred yards of her; and just as our steward started ringing the breakfast bell the captain and I had aloft, in good view of the figures watching us over her stern, the keg, properly headed up and containing, besides an enormous bundle of old newspaper, two boxes of figs in honour of the day. We flung it far out over the rail. Instantly our ship, sliding down the slope of a high swell, left it far behind in our wake. On board the Alaska a man in a fur cap flourished an arm; another, a much a be-whiskered person, ran forward suddenly. I never saw anything so ready and so smart as the way that whaler, rolling desperately all the time, lowered one of her boats. The Southern Ocean went on tossing the two ships like a juggler his gilt balls, and the microscopic white speck of the boat seemed to come into the game instantly, as if shot out from a catapult on the enormous and lonely stage. That Yankee whaler lost not a moment in picking up her Christmas present from the English wool clipper.

Before we had increased the distance very much she dipped her ensign in thanks and asked to be reported "All well, a catch of three fish." I suppose it paid them for two hundred and fifteen days of risk and toil, away from the sounds and sights of the inhabitated world, like outcasts devoted, beyond the confines of mankind's life, to some enchanted and lonely penance.

Christmas Days at sea are of varied character, fair to middling and down to plainly atrocious. In this statement I do not include Christmas Days on board passenger ships. A passenger is, of course, a

brother (or sister), and quite a nice person in a way, but his Christmas Days are, I suppose, what he wants them to be: the conventional festivities of an expensive hotel included in the price of his ticket.

Ocean Travel

The one statement that can safely be advanced about travelling at sea is that it is not what is used to be. It is different now elementally. It is not so much a matter of changed propelling power; it is something more. In the old days, under the machinery of sails, the distinguished and the undistinguished travellers (of whom there were not so very many) were wafted to distant parts of the world by the movement of variable air currents. Now the travelling multitudes are taken to their destination because of the invariable resistance of water to the screwing motion of the propeller, with which fire (that other element) has a lot to do. The whole affair of progress the seas has become much more complicated and much more precise on its physical side. It has grown also into a marvel.

But a marvellous achievement is not necessarily interesting. It may render life more tame than perhaps it should be. I do not mean that any marvel of applied science can tame the wild spirit that lurks in all men, and of which the proofs are not far to seek. It only makes the condition of our pilgrimage less exciting.

The whole psychology of sea travel is changed. Formerly a man setting out of a sea voyage broke away from shore conditions and found in the ship a new kind of home. This applied even to such comparatively short passages as across the Atlantic. But now a man (especially it setting out for the United States) brings the conditions of shore life with him on board, and finds in his ship the usual sort of hotel, with its attempts at all kinds of sham comforts, all the disadvantages of gregarious life, with the added worry of not being able to get away from it for a certain number of days. The only comfort is to be found in the assurance that the number of days is not great and that, barring accidents, it is fixed. There is a definite date to look forward to — the date of release from that more or less luxurious prison any ship must be to any passenger.

That every passenger (even in the biggest and most hotel-like Atlantic ferries with their territorial names) wishes to escape there can be not the slightest doubt. He may say what he likes, it is a fact of human nature. He looks forward to his release much as any prisoner.

The modern traveller has never the time to get into an acquiescent mood. The sham shore conditions which the shipping companies try to create for him stand in the way, too. The hold of the land (which is his natural element) is on him all through the passage, and he suffers from a subtle disharmony between his natural tastes and his surroundings.

It was otherwise with the old-time traveller under sail: he had to become acclimatized to that moral atmosphere of ship life which he was fated to breathe for so many days. He was no dweller in an unpleasantly unsteady imitation of a Ritz Hotel. He would before long begin to feel himself a citizen of a small community in special conditions and with special interests which gradually ceased to be secret to him, and in the end secured his sympathies. The machinery of his propulsion, the picturesque activities of the men of the sea, lay open to his sight and appealed to his sympathies.

In the course of my sea life, a time when it never occurred to me that I myself might be a passenger some day, I was for a couple of years officer of a sailing passenger ship out of the Port of London. This gave me the opportunity to watch that process of acclimatization of which I have spoken, in a group of about sixty persons of various ages and temperaments, some travelling for their health and others only for rest — which they indubitably secured in our passages that averaged about eighty days. Part of our passengers, those from the Midlands generally, used to come on board in London Dock, while others, those from the South and from London itself preferred to join the ship in Plymouth, where we had to call in order to embark the live stock for the voyage. Of that feathered and four-footed company the most important item was the milch-cow which joined the ship mainly "for the benefit of the children," as

the advertisements had it. It was the last living that came on board, already boxed and in its travelling stall, and displaying a most praiseworthy composure even while spinning in midair at the foreyard arm before being landed on the foredeck against the mast, to which its straitened habitation was secured for the passage with lashings of chain and rope fit to withstand the heaviest weather we were likely to encounter.

There, on fine mornings (and there are more fine mornings at

sea than have ever been dreamt of in a landsman's philosophy), the ship's children, some controlled by nursemaids, others running loose, trooped forward to pay a visit to their cow, which looked with mild big eyes at the small citizens of our sea community with the air of knowing all there was to know about them.

All this may sound very primitive, but it had a charm and an intimacy of a settled existence no modern steamship with its long barren alleyways swept by the wind and decorated with the name of promenade decks can give. The modern passenger may be able to walk a good many miles in his ship in the course of the day, but this is the only thing which differentiates him from the bales of goods carried in the hold — this, and the power of swallowing the food which is presented to him at regular intervals. He is carried along swiftly and fed delicately, but the other lived the life of his ship, that sort of life which is not sustained on bread (and supreme au volaille) alone, depends for its interest on enlarged sympathies and awakened perceptions of nature and men.

I have seen old maiden ladies develop, during a passage nice discrimination in the matter of steering. They had their favourite helmsmen. Elderly business men would become good judges of the set of the sails and acquire a seaman's eye for the aspects of the weather — and almost all, men and women, became reconciled to the vast solitude of the sea untroubled by the sound of the world's mechanical contrivances and the noise of its endless controversies. The silence of the Universe would lie very close to the sailing ship, with her freight of lives from which the daily stresses and anxieties had been removed, as if the circle of the horizon had been a magic ring laid on the sea. No doubt the days thus enchanted were empty, but they were not so tedious as people may imagine. They passed quickly, and, if they brought no profit or excitement, I cannot help thinking that they were not wasted. Nol They were not wasted.

Outside Literature

Having been prompted by a certain literary suggestion to reflect upon the nature of Notices to Mariners, I fell to examining some of my old feeling and impressions which, strictly professional as they were, have yet contributed in the end towards the existence of a certain amount of literature; or at any rate of pages of prose. The Notices to Mariners are good prose but I think no critic would admit them into the body of literature. And it is only as compositions in prose that I believe myself competent to speak of them. And first let me thank God that they do not belong to imaginative literature. It would be dreadful if they did. An imaginatively written Notice to Mariners would be a deadly thing. I mean it literally. It would be sure to kill a number of people before its imaginative quality had been appreciated and suppressed. That their style must be clear and concise, and the punctuation of the ordinary kind, would not necessarily militate against their being regarded as literature. The Maxims of La Rochefoucauld are concise enough. But they open horizons; they plumb the depths; they make us squirm, shudder, smile in turn; and even sigh — at times; whereas the prose of the Notices to Mariners must do nothing of the kind.

And it doesn't. A mariner detected shuddering or sighing over a Notice to Mariners would simply (to speak in unliterary language) be not fit for his job. All means of acting on man's spiritual side are forbidden to that prose. In those compositions which are read as earnestly as anything that ever came from printing press, all suggestion of Love, of Adventure, of Romance, of Speculation, of all that decorated and ennobles life, except Responsibility, is barred. What we expect from them is not suggestion but information of an ideal accuracy, such as you do not find in the prose of works on science, which is mainly imaginative and often solemnly mystifying. That is why some quite decent men are moved to smile as they read it. But there is no mystification in the language of truth contained in the Notices to Mariners. You would not want to smile at them. No decent man would. Even Mr. Punch, to whom as a great burlesque poet nothing is supposed to be sacred, and who has been seen

lately taking liberties with the explosive atom, would not dream of making fun out of Notices to Mariners. Mr. Punch knows better. He knows that for an inspired poet who sees the mystic relations of sublunary matters, Notices to Mariners are things to be read reverently. They are like declarations of a minutely careful Providence. They can be imagined as directed in a quiet voice by the angel who, in the words of the songs, sits aloft to watch over poor Jack. They belong to a prose which, if certainly not immortal, is revelatory to its own generation.

Addressed to a special, public, limited to a very definite special subject, having no connection with the intellectual culture of mankind, and yet of some importance to a civilization which is founded on the protection of life and property, that prose has only one ideal to attain, to hold on to: the ideal of perfect accuracy. You would say that such an ideal may easily be captured by a steady, prosaic mind devoting itself for a few minutes (the Notices to Mariners are short) every day to the task of composition. Why, yes! But what about misprints — the bane of authors?

And then the absences. I mean the absences of mind. It is a fact that the most pedestrian mind will sometimes take a flight from the office where it works (I suppose Notices to Mariners are written in some sort of office) toward subjects of poetic fancy, its children, its lady love, its glass of beer, and such other things interesting to its mortal envelope. I often wondered what the author of Notices to Mariners looks like. I have tried to represent him to yourself as a monk, a man who has renounced the vanities of the world, and for preference belonging to the order of Trappists who are bidden to remember death — mementomori — and nothing else. A sobering thought! Just suppose the author of Notices to Mariners acquiring convivial habits and sitting down to write a Notice in that happy frame of mind

when nothing matters much and one letter of the alphabet is as good as another. For myself — who am not convivial in that sense and have written a varied lot of prose a quite ridiculous scrupulosity and an absurd seriousness — I don't mind confessing that if I were told to write a Notice to Mariners I would not pray perhaps — for I have my own convictions about the abuse of prayer

— but I would certainly fast. I would fast in the evening and get up to write my Notice to Mariners at four o'clock in the morning for fear of accidents. One letter is so soon written for another — with fatal results.

It happened to me many years ago to endanger the course of my humble career at sea simply by writing the letter W instead of the letter E at the bottom of a page full of figures. It was an examination and I ought to have been plucked mercilessly. But in consideration, I believe, of all my other answers being correct I was handed that azimuth paper back by the examiner's assistant, with the calm remark, "You have fourteen minutes yet." I looked at the face of the clock; it was round like the moon, white as a ghost, unfeeling, idiotic. I sat down under it with the conviction of the crushing materiality of time, and calling in my mind the assistant examiner a sarcastic brute. For no man could have gone over all those figures in fourteen minutes. I hope my exasperated consternation at this check could not be detected. It was funny even to myself. Then, just at the moment when my sinking heart had touched bottom, I saw the error staring at me, enormous, gross, palpable. I traced hastily a capital E over the W and went back to the desk with my sheet of blue paper in a still shaky hand. The assistant hardly glanced at it before he let it drop, and I saw then that in my lack of comprehension it was I saw then that in my lack of comprehension it was I who had been an unqualified brute. For in his remark about the fourteen he had clearly tried to give me a hint. He was a charming young man, obviously poor, with an intelligent, as if suffering, face. Not exactly sickly, but delicate. A sea voyage would have done him good. But it was I who went to sea — this time bound to Calcutta.

And it was in Calcutta, a few months afterwards, that one morning my captain on going ashore saw me busy about the decks and beckoned to me in that way ship masters have, or used to have. I mean ship masters who commanded their ships from truck to keelson as it were, technically and spiritually, in motion and at rest, and through every moment of their life, when the seaman's calling was by the mere force of its conditions more vocational than it can be at the present day. My ship master had that way of

beckoning. What way?" Well-all I can say of it is that one dropped everything. I can't describe it better. So I dropped whatever I was doing and he said: "You will find a Notice on the cabin table. Go in and enter it on the proper Admiralty sheet. Do it now." Which I hastened to da.

That examination, the issue of which had hung on a capital letter, had caused me to be officially certified as fit to undertake that particular duty: and ever since then my familiarity with Notices to Mariners, which are not literature, went on growing through a course of years, up to the moment when stepping ashore for the last time I lost all touch with the most trusted kind of printed prose. Henceforth I had to begin (while totally unprovided with Notices to Authors) to write prose myself; and the pains I took with it only my Maker knows! And yet I never learned to trust it. I can't trust it to this day. We who write prose which is not that of Notices to Mariners are forgotten by Providence. No angel watches us at our toil. A dreadful doubt hangs over the whole achievement of literature; I mean that of its greatest and its humblest men. Wasn't it "Papa Augier" who, being given a copy of "Hamlet," glanced through it expertly and then dropped it with the dry remark:" I/bus appelezga unepidce, vous?The whole tragedy of art lies in the nutshell of this terrifying anecdote. But it never will occur to anybody to question the prosaic force of the author of Notices to Mariners, which are not literature, and his fidelity to his honourable ideal — the ideal of perfect accuracy.

Legends

To watch the growth of a legend is a sad occupation. It is not so much because legends'deal with people and things finished and done with; that they spring, as it were, from amongst the bones of dead men. Flowers (as I have seen myself) will do that too. That's all in the order of nature, and both flowers and legends are upon the whole decorative, which all to the good.

I have nothing against a legend twining its tendrils fancifully about the facts of history or the tables of statistics (which can be fanciful too, though they can never be made very decorative). They spring from noble soil, they are a form;of memory which we all like to leave behind us, that lingers about the achievement of men who have had their day and the vanished forms of things which have served the needs of their time.

One could welcome that fine form of imaginative recognition of the past with nothing worse than the gentle melancholy which the passage of time brings in its train if it were not disfigured by touches of fatuity of which no legend is wholly free, because I suspect that those who record its tales as picked out on the lips of men are doing it in a spirit of love. And that is only right and proper But love is uncritical. It is an enthusiastic state seeing romance in what may be not true to the spirit of its subject, so to speak. And thus the false which is often fatuous also creeps into a worthy or even noble story.

Or even into a holy story. The Golden Legend itself. The legend of saints and their miracles is an awful example of the danger — as any one who turns over a few pages of it may see. Saintliness is made absurd by the presentation of the miraculous facts themselves. It lacks spirituality in a surprising way.

Yes, fatuity lurks in all legends fatally by the effect of our common credulity. However, the legend I have in my mind has nothing to do with saints — but with beings at first sight infinitely different, but whose lives were hard (no saint, I take it, ever slept on a bed of roses) if not exactly ascetic, and if not hermit-like, yet as far removed from the commonest amenities and the simplest

affections which make life sweet, and as much removed from the material interest of this world as the most complete spiritual renunciation could make it.

Perhaps nobody could guess from what precedes that I have sailors in my mind. I do not mean to be irreverent if I insist that in a temporal sense there was much that was edifying in their lives. They did not work miracles, to be sure, but I have seen them repeatedly do all that men can do for their faith — if it was only the faith in their own manhood. And thattis something, surely. But there was something more in it, something larger — a fidelity to the demands of their calling which I verily believe was for all of them I knew, both afloat and ashore, vocational quite as much in its way as any spiritual call a man's nature has ever responded to. And all that for no perceptible reward in the praise of man and the favour of gods — I mean the sea gods, an indigent, pitiless lot, who had nothing to offer to servants at their shrine but a ward in some hospital on shore or a sudden wedding with death in a great uproar, but with no gilding of fine words about it. La mort sans phrases.

In all this there is material for a fine legend, if not of saintly virtues, then of a consistent display of manhood. And the legend will not be long, for the last days of sailing ships were short if one thinks of the countless ages since the first sail of leather or rudely woven rushes was displayed to the wind. Stretching the period both ways to the utmost, it lasted from 1850 to 1910. Just sixty years. Two generations. The winking of an eye. Hardly the time to drop a prophetic tear. For the pathos of that era lies in the fact that when the sailing ships and the art of sailing them reached their perfection, they were already doomed. It was a swift doom, but it is consoling to know that there was no decadence.

That era has, however, had its historians, such as Mr. Basil Lubbock, for instance, whose devotion to the glory of the ships and the merits of the men has the character of one of those romantic passions

that last a lifetime. He is now of the brotherhood initiated with all the awful ce-emonies of a Cape Horn passage. He speaks with much knowledge. And there is Miss C. Fox-Smith, in whom I verily-believe the quintessence of the collective soul of the latter-

day seaman has found its last resting-place and a poignant voice before taking its flight for ever from the earth. Truth itself speaks in her verse — I can safely say, since I (surprising thought) have one foot, at least, in that irrecoverable phase of old sea life for which their piety and their talents have done so much.

It is on that ground that I would remonstrate with Mr. Lubbock against the admission into one of his books of sea chronicles of a tale which would degrade the character of any legend. The facts of a legend need not be literally true. But they ought to be credible and they must be in a sort of fundamental accord with the nature of the life they record, that is with the character of their subject matter. The subject of the Golden Legend is, in fact, the celebration of a miracle-working holiness, and the subject of any sea legend must consummate seamanship — an era that seems as distant now as the age of miracles.

The history of the latter days of clipper ships and their men may bQ said to begin with the Marco Polo and the man who commanded her. His name was Forbes, and he is not a figure to stand at the head of a sea legend. He lacked balance in his character. Luck alone made him, and at the first adversity be collapsed. But without going into the details of his short career, I am sure I am doing good service to his memory by trying to purge his record of the most fatuous tale that ever cropped up in any legend of the sea.

As adopted, alas! (but the best of us may err) by Mr. Basil Lubbock, it runs that Forbes used to padlock the sheets of the Marco Polo's sails — one reviewer explaining kindly "to guard against the timid members of a crew," a priceless phrase, whatever it may mean. What is a "timid member" and how do you recognize him? Anyhow, I am sure he is a fitting person to play his part in that padlock story.

I wonder who was the man to tell it? He must have been an ironmonger trying for a new outlet for his wares. And to what sort of audience? Personally I would have been afraid to tell it to the Horse-Marines — that mysterious corps which is famed for its capacity to swallow anything in the way of a yarn.

[This article was left unfinished at Conrad's death.]

The Unlighted Coast

I came ashore bringing with me strongest of all, and most persistent, the impression of a great darkness. (do not mean darkness in a symbolic or spiritual sense. Indeed, one couldn't come from contact with the watches of that darkness, and the workers therein, otherwise than spiritually strengthened. What I mean is the fact itself, the fact of darkness spread over the land and water of old civilization such as wrapped up early mariners' landfalls on their voyages of exploration. To him who had been accustomed to behold after long sea passages the shadowy contours of the English coast illuminated festally, interminably, unfailingly, as if for a sleepless feast or for sleepless toil, the impression was very powerful — like a revelation of some deeper truth. Fires in the night are the sign of mankind's life to an eye at sea. There were no such signs anywhere. Not a gleam. And yet life had never before perhaps in the history of that unlighted island known such an intense consciousness of itself. No! Life had not departed that sombre shore. It was only its old sense of security that was no longer there.

It had a strange air of finality. The land had turned to a shadow. Of all scourges and visitations against which mankind prays to Heaven, it was not pestilence that had smitten that shore dark; it was war; with sudden death, another of that dreaded company, full of purpose, in the air, on the water, and under the water. Breathing the calm air of the night, looking at this placid sea gleaming faintly, here and there, as still water will do in the dark, it was as hard to believe in the existence of this prowling death as in the dauntless, tense life of that obscured land. That mere shadow — big with fate.

One seemed to have one's being in the very centre of illusory appearance. The very silence, so profound around us as to seem boundless, and harmonizing marvellously with the spirit of the hour, was not true to the usual meaning it conveys to a human mind, that of being cut off from communication with its kind.

For just as I was remarking to the officer by my side that surely neither Caesar's galleys nor the ships of the Danish rovers had ever found on their approach this land so absolutely and

scrupulously lightless as this — just then a voice behind us was heard: "I've here two message I have just picked up."

It was our wireless man. That shadow emitting no sound waves, no waves of light, was talking to its watchers at sea; filling the silence with words pregnant with the truth, the naked, ugly truth of the situation.

And the man with two white pieces of paper very noticeable in his hand said: "It's our station at X speaking."

For reasons which had nothing to do with its efficiency we could not use our wireless installation very often, and he was immensely pleased at having picked up something for the first time in two days. We went below to decode the messages. The little cabin, in contrast with the variously shaded and toned darkness we had left, seemed scandalously over-lighted.

Although I helped to decode these messages I don't remember the exact words of their concise phrases; but the first was an inquiry, apparently directed at large into space, relating to a hostile submarine seen off the coast not many hours before. The other was a request addressed by name to a ship at sea for a report on some floating mines discovered in a certain position within the last twenty-four hours. The great motionless shadow was talking to its watchers, small shadows flitting here and there on the obscure gleams of the smooth sea veiled in the unmoral night that from its very nature favours aggression rather than vigilance, without regard to the merits of the case.

These were good samples of the talk that flows on unheard in sunshine, in straight, under the clouds. War talk. But how different from the war talk we hear on the lips of men (and even great men) which

often seems but talk round the war, obscuring the one and only question: To be or not be — the great alternative of an appeal to arms. The other, the grouped-letters war talk, almost without sound and altogether without fury, is full of sense, of meaning, and single-minded purpose; inquiries, information, orders, reports. Words, too. But words in direct relation to things and facts, with the feeling at the back of it all of the correct foresight that planned and of the determination which carries on the protective work.

We all know that a true defence is at the point of the sword; but the shield has its part to play too in defensive work. This work had been planned by the navy in anticipation of the conditions that would arise. I know that praise often is but more or less conscious impertinence. But, after all, this is seaman's work, and half a lifetime at sea may perhaps justify me in expressing the highest possible sense of the navy's clear-eyed foresight in planning, and the judgment, resolution, tact, and knowledge of men in getting the planned system to work, from the first critical days to its full development of today, steadily, without haste, yet with that speed which is inherent in the force, unswerving purpose, and in the resolute handling of any problem under the sun.

It is mainly the officers and men of the various branches of the R.N.R. who, under the high command of naval officers, have been entrusted with the manifold duties of that simple work of protection and watchfulness. It was the navy who trained them to it, and as the period had in each case to be short the general efficiency with which the work is done speaks well for the naval method. But it is also a high testimony to the capacity, adaptability, and the whole-souled earnestness of the officers of the Merchant Service who hastened to join, some called up, others volunteering without hesitation from all the points of the compass and from the uttermost ends of the Empire.

Much has been said already of these men and of their activities; of the circumstances, the conditions, the incidents of the task. I may perhaps later say something too, more in the nature of a personal impression than of detailed description. As to the work itself, all I want to point out now is that seen from outside it presents in its various branches the aspect of a nervestraining drudgery. And in that outward aspect there is a proportion of truth. From its very nature it must be work without glamour. No great moments can be expected in it. Yet, rare as drops of rain in a desert, such moments have been vouchsafed to some of the faithful. As I trace these words I have in my mind the most unexpected, the most unforeseen instance of the kind. An enormous drop in a parched and stressful monotony of duty.

On the morning I heard the tale, the pier at one of our "bases," with its central line of neat shed-like buildings and the great signal bridge at the end (recalling the superstructure of a battleship), had been for a moment swept clean of all life by a rain squall as effectually as by a point-blank broadside of shrapnel shell.

My companion and I took cover in the wardroom, a good-sized apartment lined with vanished match-boarding. A heavy table occupied the middle. The officer of the watch, a silent, detached figure, sat at a writing desk reading a note, while a young bluejacket, cap in hand, waited for the answer. Two R.N.R. officers smoking by the fire greeted us. Another sat at some distance on a chair placed against the wall near a window. He took no notice of our arrival.

But the officer with me murmured with a nod in his direction: "This is ourZeppelin-strafer."

I said: "No! Have you that, too, in your lot?"

"Yes. He'll tell you all about it."

I was introduced with a word or two of comment to "our Zeppelin-strafer." There was no halo around his head. He was young, so young that he must have belonged to the third generation of those who had gone to sea since my time; one of those who began that life after 1900. A seaman of the twentieth century! And yet he was no stranger to me. The memories of my twenty sea years crowded upon me, memories of faces, of temperaments, of expressions. And looking at him, all I could say to myself was: — How like! We sat down side by side near the window. He was in no haste to begin. He belonged to the shy, silent type — and how like!

It's an odious thing to have write in "descriptive" fashion to men with whom one talked like a friend and had found acceptance as one of themselves. If he sees these lines I hope he will forgive me. It's very

likely that my impressions set down truthfully are altogether untrue. We were but half an hour together, and when we parted and he closed the door of that room behind him I felt that he was as utterly gone from me as though he had stepped out in the middle of the Pacific.

He began to talk to me with a sort of reluctance, hesitatingly, till I mentioned to him that I had been to sea much longer than

himself, if not so recently. He knew I was some sort of writing man, and was ready to civil, but after that remark of mine his articulation because easier. Not much, though. He looked down on the ground, glancing at me only now and again, and spoke in a low tone with unexpected pauses. The best way in which I can characterize that narrative is by saying that he delivered it to me with the aspect, the bearing of a man who broods over the event in silence.

He was making his way on a foggy day back to his base after a spell of duty outside. His craft mounted one gun; and without going into unnecessary description I may best give an idea of the size of his command by saying that, when he was reposing, the breech of the gun was within four feet of his head as it lay on his pillow. For reasons that need not be stated, his vessel did not move then more than about three knots through the water — which was smooth. There's seldom much wind with thick weather. On that occasion there was a very light breeze, enough to help the fog at its usual pranks of thinning and thickening, opening and shutting, lifting in patches and closing down suddenly — quicker than a wink, sometimes.

He was walking up and down his vast deck when, turning aft, he saw the fore-end of a Zeppelin emerge into misty view out of an apparently thicker layer of fog. From then on for succeeding minutes he moved no more than a ship's timber. The apparition took him completely unawares because he had not heard any noise in the air before. Directly, however, he caught sight of the Zeppelin he heard the noise of the engine very plainly.

As soon as he regained the power of speech he uttered the words "Action ... Zeppelin ... Astern," in a cautious whisper. An unnecessary precaution. But he told me that at first the "enormous thing seemed right on top of us!" In fact, it was not anything so near as that. It was coming up astern but a little on one side and, he noticed, steering a course which would cross obliquely his wake and bring the monster very close indeed — within 500 yards perhaps.

For whatever reason, it was flying low, so low that he did not need to throw his head up much to watch its steady progress. And there followed for him such moments of unforgettable anguish,

something like the anguish of a man whose eternal salvation would depend on the soundless of his judgment.

The problem was how to deal with this gigantic piece of luck. For if he opened fire too soon the chances were that the German would swerve and get away, or, climbing overhead, would descend on him as low as he pleased and bomb him out of existence. His gun was a very good weapon of its kind, but it was not an antiaircraft gun and had only a limited amount of elevation. And there was also the possibility that, utterly unconscious of the tiny speck lost in the shimmer of the thin fog layer below, the Zeppelin would alter its course at any moment for some purpose of its own.

What worried and discomposed him was the insistent whispering of his skipper, who had crept to his elbow and was entreating hoarsely not to waste a moment, "to let the beggar have it now, sir. Let him have it." The German meantime held on. Ordering the skipper away he had the fortitude, though his heart was in his mouth all the time, to hold out till the Zeppelin crossed his wake and exposed the greater part of its side. ... "And then," he said, "we started to plug it into him as fast as we could load. And every shot was a hit."

He looked at me with strangely troubled eyes. "It was impossible to miss ... you know," he added in a lowered voice.

Whether conscious or unconscious before of the microscopic strafer below, Fritz must have had the surprise of his life. The record shock of Zeppelin history. His dismay was boundless, something very like panic up there became visible to the eyes below.

... “I could see three or four of them running along,” went on the low voice. “I saw them quite plainly. If I had half-a-dozen men with rifles on my deck we could have got every singte one of them.”

The Zeppelin swung off wide and with its engines working noisily, made off without more ado. Its own speed or the drift of denser fog blowing over turned it into a mere dark blur swiftly. As long as the faintest shadow of it remained visible the fire was kept up. Then it ceased. A profound silence ensued. It was all over. He was gone.

It was, however, possible that he might return overhead and

take his revenge. But before the strafers on deck had the time to exchange glances of wonder, apprehension or inquiry, while they were still, in fact, staring into the upper fog, the shadow reappeared nearer than before aslant in the white space, sliding downwards stern first, its nose tilted up at a perilous angle.

“Of course we opened on him instantly,” he went on. “And do you know what he did then?”

At this point he looked at me again, and after a little gasp went on, as if unwillingly, “he dumped all his bombs overboard. The whole lot of them at once.”

The resulting explosion was something terrific. He felt as if his little were blown clean out of the water and at the same time hit by a tidal wave. And in the awful commotion, uproar, and black smoke the Zeppelin shot up and vanished for good.

“You must have made him very sick,” I said.

“He looked very sick indeed,” said the young strafer quietly.

“I wonder what became of him?”

Hard to say. There was a report in the papers some time afterwards... Damaged Zeppelin coming to the ground in Norway. ...I sometimes think...”

He did not finish the sentence. He had been eighteen months of long days and longer nights at his protecting work, out and in, fair or foul, never seeing anything to reward his strained, hopeful vigilance, and sometimes for days seeing nothing at all. For the North Sea is a big place, as our coasters say: so big that there may be half-a-dozen ships out looking for you because you are a little late in returning (as it happened to a man), and you will come in innocently, having seen no one, unseen by anybody — which is vexing for the anxious searchers.

Eighteen patient, unfaltering months, and then this ten gloriously crowded minutes — is that much? The whole affair probably did not last so long.

Rare, like drops of water in a desert, are such opportunities for the watcher of the lightless shore. And to this one Fortune had not been fickle, but simply outrageous. The drop had merely brushed past his lips so unskilled in speech. He had talked to me in all

friendliness, for which I am duly grateful; yet he left me with the impression that had he been permitted to taste the full flavour, his official report would have remained, of his own choice, his first and last utterance. I fancy, somehow, that rather than talk to luck so immense that there could be no fit words for it in the world, he would have preferred to brood over it in adequate silence.

The Dover Patrol

The worth of a sentiment lies in the sacrifices men will make for its sake. All ideals are built on the ground of solid achievement, which in a given profession creates in the course of time a certain tradition, or, in other words, a standard of conduct. The existence of a standard of conduct in its turn makes the most improbable achievement possible, by augmenting the power of endurance and of self-sacrifice amongst men who look to the past for their lessons and or their inspiration.

The story of the achievement of the Dover patrol is merged in the greater proud record of the navy's protective part played with simplicity and self-sacrifice in the Great War of the twentieth century; yet that story has its own features, it own particular atmosphere, and its own importance.

The opening years of the nineteenth century had their Great War, too. Longer in its duration, it was carried on with less animosity. It was less in the nature of a struggle for dear life, and, except in its spirit, it was less intensely national. It did not involve in its toils the whole population. It did not involve in its toils the whole population. The issues at stake were as great, perhaps, but did not appear in such definite shapes to the great mass of the people which suffered its hardship and gave up its sons to its struggles. In its most obvious aspects that war, like the one of our day, was waged against an attempt at universal dominion. But it must be admitted that it was also a war against the revolt of newborn ideas represented by a great and dominant figure issued from a revolution and taking its own fatally conquering way amongst the imperfectly awakened nations of Europe. It was a struggle of the old certitudes against a man embodying the new force of subversive beliefs. It ran its course, as momentous, if less ruthless, than the deadly struggle in which the Dover Patrol has played its part. When it ended it left the world as weary, indeed, as it is today, but much less unsettled in its thoughts and emotions about the spiritual value of its monstrous experience. Men's ideas were simpler then, their sentiments less complex. Their desires and hopes, as poignant perhaps, remained

still obscure. The instinctive reaction against all the cruel negations a war imposes on humanity had a less resentful character; and men's judgment of the attained issue was less embittered by the effort they had been called upon to make. Yet their personal feelings were much like our own.

When the hour of peace struck in 1815 there must have been on board the King's ships anchored in the Downs, patrolling in the Channel, in the squadrons on distant stations, and in others cruising off nearly every port of northern Europe — there must have been the feeling that there never would be such a war again; a feeling of relief, mingled, no doubt, with a half-acknowledged sense of regret for the occupation that was gone. The great question arising at the end of every prolonged effort made by mankind — And now — what next? asked without misgivings in the consciousness of an accomplished duty — was not free from a certain uneasiness as to the days that would follow in other and unknown conditions. For a whole generations had grown from boyhood to maturity with no knowledge of peace conditions, and unperturbed by moral doubts of its warlike achievement.

Amongst the men of the Dover Patrol assembled to see the unveiling of the memorial to their own unforgettable dead there will be also a feeling of regret for those days that are past, regret of the strenuous life with its earnest purpose, its continuity of risk, its sense of professional efficiency, its community of desperate toil; regret even of those moments of extreme bodily fatigue associated with that feeling of spiritual exaltation which enabled them each in his station, from the Admiral commanding to the youngest member of a small drifter's crew, to defy the enmity of nature and the hostility of men.

Nobody would dream of apportioning shares of importance in the great task of the navy, so varied in its unity, so diverse in its singleness of aim and its invariable purpose. But it is a fact that amongst all those activities directed to the same end, exposed to the same risk, making the same appeal, and

entered upon with the same courage, the work of the Dover Patrol was very special work. The Dover Patrol held the southern exit of the North Sea in the

same way in which the Grand Fleet may be said to have held its northern entrance; and the greatness of its responsibility may be appreciated from the one dominant fact: that on that Patrol rested the safety of our communications with the army in France, and that one of its achievements was the safe passage across the Channel of about seven million men without a single instance of failure, in the presence of a superior enemy established in force within easy distance on the flank of the line; an enemy superior in numbers and material, holding in his hands every element of successful attack except for just a portion, an ever so small portion, of that sea spirit animating the others and men of the Dover command who stood in his way — including the very workers on shore in repair workshops and fitting-out sheds.

There was never a greater accord of fearless executive energy and skilled hard work than in the Dover Patrol. From the point of view of its spiritual harmony it was worthy to hold the extreme right wing of the great sea defence. Of its material success we all know by now; we have all heard of the millions of men transported to and fro across the Straits, of miles of nets laid along the coasts and kept in repair in defiance of heavy seas and long-range batteries, of mines swept along routes equalling in length twelve times the circumference of the globe, of merchant fleets of a hundred ships and more shepherded every day through the Downs. The eloquence of arithmetical figures as applied to the merits of the Dover Patrol is overwhelming indeed; but no figure of rhetoric can render justice to the quiet resolution of the men making up for the inadequacy of the means, the unavoidable inadequacy of the means for which only the force of circumstances was responsible, for which no past government can be blamed, since no one could have guessed the enormous scale of material requirements.

The means were inadequate, woefully inadequate; and thus the only trumps the Admiral of the Dover Patrol held in his hand at every turn of the dreadful game were the physical endurance, the inborn seamanship, the matter-of-fact, industrious, indefatigable enthusiasm with which every one under his orders threw his very soul into his appointed task. Threw it in and kept it there. It was no

momentary effort. For the anxious days of the Dover Patrol were to be many, its nights full of dangers, its problems exacting, its duty calls incessant, and its men after all but the flesh and blood of our common humanity. Their souls were the only trumps in the desperate game, as he who was in command must have felt at every moment of night and day. It was a great and successful game, but it must be confessed that for more than half the time it was a game of bluff. It came off at every deal, England's usual luck, that this time, too, has not failed her at the hour of need! And England may well be proud of her traditional luck in the character of her children serving her at sea, on shore, and in the air.

The activities of the Dover Patrol were of many kinds, but there were three imperative duties to which all its energies had to be devoted: the safety of the troop-transport service, the protection of merchant shipping, the closing of the Channel exit against the German submarines. One need not insist on their vital importance for the army and the nation or on the deadly danger of even a temporary failure. The work had to be carried out with the slenderest conceivable means, with obsolete torpedo destroyers, and with unarmed drifters, in the presence of an enemy of superior force and possessing an infinite advantage in his power to choose his own time for an attack of the most deadly kind. Those three purely naval problems required incessant hard work, incessant risk, and incessant vigilance. The routine of the Dover Patrol included the boarding of ships, the regulation of traffic along the cleared war lane, the laying of net and mine barrages on the Belgian coast and across the Channel, their guard and maintenance in all weathers and in all circumstances, with always present in all minds the sense of numerical inferiority in a mission the failure of which might have well brought about something not very far from national disaster. In such conditions the stress put upon the fortitude of every individual was bound to be very great.

The Dover Patrol was equal to it. Its devotion, expressed in a plodding, dogged perseverance, stood the test of frequent severe losses in men and ships, and of continuous severe strain on its mental and physical faculties as a whole. The tale of the Dover

Patrol is the tale of a small nucleus of ships and crews of the Royal Navy, and round it of a great number of other men and other vessels, mostly fisher-folk and fishercraft, with the addition of merchant Sen/ice men and of R.N.R. and R.N.V.R. officers and ratings. Though, properly speaking, not belonging to the fighting service, all those men lived up to their old tradition and were found sufficient for the trust reposed in them.

They were found sufficient. No praise could be more adequately expressed, when one looks at the magnitude of the trust and the arduous character of the operations it imposed upon the men and the ships of the Dover command. Originating in the simple Downs Boarding Flotilla, under the orders of the naval officer commanding at Harwich, the Dover Patrol developed an independent existence and by the establishment of fortified German naval bases on the coast of Flanders acquired an importance in the scheme of naval defence which cannot well be exaggerated. The reinforcements and supplies for the army, the food for the country, demanded the safety of the Straits. Had the enemy probed the weakness of the Dover Patrol and broken with his overwhelming force through that thin defence to invade the waters of the Channel, it would have been a disaster, the fatal consequences of which imagination even now shrinks from contemplating.

The great sailor-like qualities of the Dover Patrol, the consummate seamanship displayed in the planning and execution of its incessant operations, its steady manner of meeting deadly emergencies, its cool vigilance in the presence of an ever-menacing situation, may well compel the admiration of any man who knows something, however little, of the demands of sea sen/ice. To the risks of actual warfare the crews of the drifters watching over the barrage nets were often helplessly exposed. But nothing could dismay either the naval or the auxiliary branches of the Dover Patrol. These men were concerned about the perfection of their work, but the sudden flash of German guns in the night troubled them not at all. As, indeed, why should it? In their early days some of them had but a single rifle on board to meet the three four inch guns of German destroyers. Unable to put a fight and without speed to get away,

they made a sacrifice of their lives every time they went out for a turn of duty; they concentrated their valour on the calm, seamanlike execution of their work amongst the exploding mines and bursting shells. It was their conception of their honour, and they carried it out of this war unblemished by a single display of weakness, by the slightest moment of hesitation in the long tale of dangerous service.

In this simple way these seamen, professional and unprofessional, naval and civilian, have earned for themselves the memorial erected to their faithful labours. The record of the Dover Patrol's work contains a great moral and a good many professional lessons for their children and their successors; the incalculable value of a steady front, the perfecting of nets, the exact process of laying barrages in a tideway, the evolving of an ingenious method for night bombardments, and of a system of long-range firing — a whole great store of new ideas and new practice laid up for future use. But in truth that which in the last instance kept the German forces from breaking disastrously on any dark night into the Channel, and jeopardizing the very foundations of our resisting power, was not the wonderfully planned and executed defences of nets and mines, but the indomitable hearts of the men of the Dover Patrol.

Memorandum on the Scheme for Fitting Out a Sailing Ship for the Purpose of Perfecting the Training of Merchant Services Officers Belonging to the Port of Liverpool

Assuming that the generous public spirit of the Liverpool shipowners will find the capital necessary for the building and equipping a southern-going sailing ship to perfect the training of the officers of the Mercantile Marine, I conceive that the cost of running such a ship — that is: wages, upkeep, repairs, general surveys and insurance — ought to be covered by what she may earn as a cargo carrier on the training voyages which will be planned for her.

Here I will submit to the originators of the scheme that a voyage to an Australian port (including New Zealand) out by the Cape and round by the Horn would be the best for such a purpose. My reasons are: the healthy climate of that part of the world, the number of the meteorological regions traversed which will develop sound judgment as to weather, the comparative facility of the voyage, combined with a great variety of general experience which a round trip of that sort will offer. The length of passages need not be an objection; the complete training of a young seaman ought to include the experience of many together at sea between v/ater and sky. It would have a spiritual and practical value for him even if he is destined never to be out of sight of land for more than a few days in his future professional life.

Chapter 1

Assuming then that the ship would be expected to be self-supporting (and no more) it is my deliberate opinion that her size should be limited strictly to the tonnage which will enable her under modern conditions to pay her expenses. I venture to suggest (however shocking it may appear to the minds of men who own and manage fleets of large steamships) fourteen to fifteen hundred tons, or as

near thereto as is consistent with the earning of her expenses, as the proper tonnage for the ship. I admit that I don't know that the best freight-carrying capacity of a ship is at the present time; but I beg the Committee charged with the elaboration of the scheme to allow me to expose my reasons for what I advance in support of the above opinion. I must premise here that in all that i am going to say I will be drawing on my own experience as a seaman trained to his duties under the British flag and, in regard to the performance of such duties, having a good record for more than sixteen years of sea life, both in sail and steam.

My contention is that for sea-going qualities, ease of handling, quickness is manoeuvring, and even in point of actual safety, if caught in a bad position, nothing can beat a, say, 1400-ton ship, designed so as to have a dead weight carrying capacity of about once and a half her registered tonnage. The same remark may be applied to the comfort in bad weather when, it must be remembered, the men managing her propelling machinery must remain exposed on the deck instead of being sheltered under it. The latest big sailing ship (in so far as she still exists) is generally in that respect what the sailors graphically describe as a mere "bathing-machine," her enormous main deck, especially when running

before a heavy sea, being always full of water and extremely uncomfortable, besides being dangerous for that very reason. Also, the great length necessarily given to those big ships of three thousand tons and over masks them clumsy to handle, anything but quick in manoeuvre, and renders them rather helpless, from their very size, in case of any serious damage either aloft or about the rudder. It is also to be remarked that a ship's quick response in manoeuvring develops a corresponding activity and smartness in her crew.

I beg the gentlemen concerned with this scheme to understand that I am not speaking as a literary person indulging his fancy but as the usual sort of Merchant Service officer who has served in all sorts of ships and draws upon his ordinary experience; with this advantage, only, that he had time to think about it and meditate over its lessons. Pursuing the matter further, I wish also to touch on the question of the ship's appearance. In a steamship the increase of

size certainly makes for good looks, adding to the inherent beauty of the lines an expression of power and dignity which arouses one's admiration. It is not so with a sailing vessel. Hardly any ship of over 2000 tons I have ever seen escaped giving an impression which may be best defined by the word "overgrown"; and I have a good many in my memory to whom nothing but the sailors' graphic phrase "a big, clumsy brute" could in justice be applied. Now, in view of the end which the Liverpool shipowners have in equipping a sailing ship, that is to perfecnhe training of officers for their fleets, certain ideal elements must be taken into consideration. It is very necessary that those boys should grow attached to their ship (an easy thing for a sailor to do), be proud of her individual appearance, of her sea qualities, of their association with her; and that they should remember their period of training, not as a horrible grind in discomfort and without personal gratification of any kind, but as a great time in their lives; an experience it has been their privilege as seamen of the Port of Liverpool to go through; a time to be remembered with pleasure and pride, somewhat as an old public-school boy looks back at his old school, the beauty of its old buildings and the prestige of its traditions. The greatest achievements of Merchant Sen/ice seamen have been performed in ships of between 900 to 1600 tons, in the way of record passages (which were then the exclusive merit of seamen), of feats in clever handling and in the bringing in of disabled ships to port by their own seamanship and determination without any outside assistance. And if the objection is made that I am advocating things hopelessly out of date, then my answer will be that in this scheme of perfected training associated so closely with men's morale and with old traditions, the out-of-dateness argument does not apply. On the practical side that objection may be met by pointing out that those boys are not to be trained for officers of modern sailing ships, but to be perfectedas future officers of the finest rfiodern steamships. Therefore, what is important is to give them for their training not the most modern sailing ship (which in any case in doomed and need not be taken into consideration at all), but to select for them the best period of sailing-ship practice and service.

One more consideration I want to present to the originators of the scheme, which is this: that in a very large sailing ship there is always a tendency to supply her (on account of the difficulty of manning her effectively) with a lot of labour-saving appliances. This brings me to the second postulate which, after the size of the ship I am most anxious to submit for consideration. And it is this:

Chapter 2

That there should be no labour-saving appliances in the shape of steam winches and so on; and that the hoisting of the sails, the working of the boats, and the general physical work of the sailor's calling should be done by man power, of which, of course, the cadets on board would be the principal part. A vertical boiler, mainly for the purpose of heaving up the anchors, may be advisable; but the windless should be of the kind which can be also worked by the crew by means of a capstan on the forecastle-head.

My reasons for this insistence on the use of man power are as follows: First of all, there is no necessity for anything else. With forty boys out of any given batch on board (Mr. Holt mentions eighty as the number and on that point I will offer a remark later) of an advanced physical development and certain weight of body, together with a ship's crew of, say, twelve A.B.'s, four officers, and some other ratings, the officers ought to be able to handle a ship, of the size and rig I am thinking of, like a plaything. Secondly, it may be laid down as an axiom that no labour done on board ship in the way of duty is either too hard or in any way unworthy of the best effort and attention or, so to speak, beneath the dignity of any youngster wishing to fit himself to be a good officer. Thirdly, there is undoubtedly something elevating in physical work into which one puts all one's heart in association with others and for a clearly understood purpose. Apart from that it will bring these youths into a more intimate contact with the propelling machinery of the ship and they will, so to speak, learn the feel of it. It mustn't be forgotten that seamen's woik was never looked upon or had the character of mere slavish toil, as some branches of labour on shore tend to become. In its essence

life at sea has been always a healthy life, and part of that was owing to the very nature of the physical exertions required. I affirm with profound conviction that sailing-ship life is an excellent physical developer. I have repeatedly seen a delicate youngster brought on board by an anxious relative change out of all knowledge into a stout youth during a twelve month's voyage. I have never seen an apparently delicate boy break down under the conditions of the sea life of my time. They all improved. Moreover, any physical work intelligently done develops a special mentality; in this case it would be the sailor mentality; surely a valuable acquisition for a sea officer either in sail or steam.

Ill

The sailing ship, then, I have in my eye (something very much like the Liverpool Sierras which were afloat between '80 and '90) would be a hull of between 1400 and 1500 tons register with a dead weight capacity of over 2000 tons, in which case it would be sufficient for her to have three square-rigged masts. If the tonnage of the ship is raised to 2000 tons register then there must be four masts, of which the aftermost one would be rigged fore and aft. In any case, I would advocate for the training ship a long poop and a very roomy forecastle head; the poop, if the vessel is three-masted, extending as far as the main rigging; and the object being to reduce the area of the main deck as much as possible. This would tend to make the ship much more comfortable. Ships with long poops are always the driest in all weathers and safest for the individuals having to move about the decks in heavy weatner. The main deck would have on it a deck house in the space between the for coaming of the main hatch and the foremast; leaving a clear passage across at each end and foremast; leaving a clear passage across at each end and having wide alleyways on each side. The house would contain the vertical boiler for raising steam for the windlass; the accommodation for the ship's crew and the berths of the ship's petty officers. Under the forecastle there would be space at the sides for various storerooms, or the electric light pant, if carried, could be installed on one side

and the storerooms on the door. All that, however, may be left to the skill and ingenuity of the designer, once the actual size of the ship and the number of people she had to carry, all told, has been decided upon.

In this matter I have a certain competence because I was for 2 years chief officer of a sailing passenger ship running between London and Adelaide and I believe the very last of her kind, with the exception perhaps of the Macquarrie (later training ship for New Zealand merchant cadets), where the experience of a comparatively large number of persons on board ship could be obtained by the sailing-ship officer. She was only 1270 tons register and the greater number of people I had on board of her was 113 all told. She had room for 50 passengers when full and we had perforce to carry a lot of live stock, a milk cow for the children and so on; yet her space was not inconveniently crowded, and no passenger ever complained of cramped accommodation, and generally they made the round trip in her. She carried outwards a general cargo and in Adelaide loaded the usual Australian cargo, for the most part wool. Her poop was 78 over all; under that we carried eleven double passenger cabins on each side, two cabins for the mates, a large pantry amidships and a doctor's berth and surgery. The accommodation for

the captain consisted of two stern cabins, both very roomy, of which one was his staterooms and the other was planned an furnished as a sitting room, which he never used at sea, sharing the saloon with the passengers. This saloon contained two long tables at which all the people berthed under the poop deck could sit down to meals. I think that this arrangement could be adopted with advantage in the cadet ship under contemplation. The artificial lighting of the Torrens being oil and candles required extreme vigilance, but assuming the Liverpool cadets berthed in cabins as above, if electric light is to be introduced the lamps could be set in the partitions between them, so that each lamp would light two cabins. The long saloon would be the common room for navigational studies and meals, the electric lighting of that space, however economically applied, would be always better than the lamp-lighting of that ship which was sufficient for the passengers to read, write, or play their games in the evening. There

were never any complaints on that score. The captain of a training, ship would probably use all his accommodation at sea too, messing by himself. Apart from that it seems to me that the man entrusted with the responsible position of commanding such a training ship would wish to keep in as close touch with the boys as conformable with the preservation of proper merchant-ship discipline; and that he would not find the nearness of his cabin to the bulk of them either inconvenient or irksome.

The accommodation on the poop, being sufficient only for about 44 cadets, could be duplicated to a certain extent below, aft, on the twin deck, and be made accessible by means of the after hatch, fitted with a proper companionway. There may be some difficulty with the supply of daylight down there and in that respect the berths below would be inferior, but as there would be no doubt different grades among the boys in the way of seniority and ratings, a boy would be moved by seniority or on promotion from below to above at some time or other in the course of his training. This would be something to look forward to; and in this connection I would remark that the comfort of the boys should be care for strictly within the limits of due regard for their health, physical development and opportunity for study, and no more. The greatest simplicity in such arrangements compatible with health and self-respect should be the note; and I believe that no boy properly constituted and wishing to be a seaman will resent such a system.

I suppose that as regards the boys, at least, a three-watch system will be introduced; though I must confess that I have never seen a boy hurt by the watch and watch duty which in my time all of them had to go through during the four years of their apprenticeship. In that case, however, the utmost vigilance and alertness in the time of duty should be exacted by the officer of the watch from the cadets at their various stations, whether at the lee helm with the helmsmen, or on the lookout with an A.B. of the ship's crew, or about the decks at the different sheets, tacks and braces they may be specially told off to. The disadvantage of the three-watch system is that the cadet will be always on duty at the same hours. Some system of shifts should be introduced if only to change

the boys in rotation from one watch to another; for the habit of wakefulness is also a matter of training, and the boys should be accustomed to keep their alertness at all periods of the night. I would suggest that the senior cadets (especially those who had obtained the rating of cadet petty officer) should be employed as assistants to the officer of the watch to the fullest possible extent; and when sufficiently advanced be entrusted with the trimming of the yards, the taking in or setting of light sails in manageable weather, and so on. The progression of stations will be, I imagine, from waist-cadets to mizzen-topman, through main and fore to forecastlemen, which last would be selected from the strongest and the most advanced, during the training course of eighteen months. I imagine that the training ship with some luck in her weather and with quick dispatch at either end, could do two round voyages in that time. The Torrens, a fast ship, could have done it with ease, though as a matter of fact she made one voyage every eleven months, but then she would lie for weeks on the berth, both in London and Port Adelaide.

That ship carried four anchors, that is, three bowers and one stream, besides one big and one small kedge, and this is the number that would be sufficient for the training ship. Of course, the anchors would be stock anchors. In this connection I wish to remark that if the anchor is hove up by steam the catting

and fishing should be done by hand under all circumstances with the help of the forecastle-head capstan. As to the sails, I assume that she would carry (unless she is to be really a very big ship) six topsails, three topgallantsails, three royals four or three headsails, the usual number of staysails; and, I suggest, two courses. The crossjack course may be done away with. In my first year on board the Torrens we abolished that sail mainly out of regard for the feelings of the passengers who had their chairs placed all about the mizzenmast; and it made no difference whatever to the speed of the ship. The fair weather mizzen staysail, which was a particularly big sail, replaced it perfectly at all trims, from sharp up to two points abaft the beam. With the wind aft the crossjack was merely a nuisance.

I advocate the ship carrying single topagallantsails as a matter

of traditional practice and training. For the same reason I would suggest that the clew lines of the upper sails and the clew-garnets of the courses should be led to the quarters of the yard and not to the yardarm. The proper furling of a sail, with a smooth bunt and tightly rolled yardarms, was a great point in the habits of smartness and proper merchant-ship discipline. It was also a matter of correct seamanship, because a sail that was not properly furled in bad weather was likely to free itself and blow away from the yard. The shifting of clew lines to the yardarms was really a dodge of undermanning, since it is obvious that with no bunt to the sail less men are required to make some sort of furl of it. The training ship, however, will be anything but undermanned, and unless she were very big there would be plenty of hands in her to furl the three topgallantsails together. I have repeatedly seen the four boys of the Torrens with the addition of one able seaman furl the main topgallantsail of that ship in a stiff breeze. In a ship of 1600 tons six boys and two able seamen ought to master a topgallantsail in almost any weather. When I joined the Torrens the then master of her, Captain Cope (an old Conway boy), fell in at once with my suggestion to shift the clew lines back to the quarters of the yard, on the ground that the ship was manned well enough to do things properly.

In regard to boats, I will again refer to my experience of the Torrens (a sailing ship with a hundred souls on board). We carried in her, aft, two quarter-boats on davits abreast the mizzen rigging. They were well above water, toggled-in against a spar so as to be disengaged by one single jerk on a lanyard (their tackle falls beings always coiled clear on deck), and in other respects were ready for lowering instantly. Owing to the shortness of a merchantman's crew the orders as to these boats were that in an emergency the nearest men (up to four) were to get into her at once, the officer of the watch and the midshipman of the watch attending to the falls. The only real test of quickness we had happened in the daytime and in light weather, when the ship was luffed up till the sails lifted and one of the quarter-boats was lowered to pick up a parrot which had flown overboard. Not having been on deck at the time I don't know how

long all this took, but the parrot survived the experience; so we must have been quick enough to have saved child, for instance, of which we always had several on board.

On the skids abaft the mainmast we carried two bigger spare boats bottom up and not ready for lowering. But the principal boats of the ship were two very roomy lifeboats, carried on skids forward, just abaft the fore rigging. They stood in chocks and their^ davits were fore-and -afted at sea, but the lowering tackles were always hooked and the fails coiled in tubs secured on the top of the deck house, of which I have spoken before. Those lifeboats were fitted out ready to "abandon ship," with sea anchors, oil bags, oars, mast and sail, blue lights, water beakers and ship's bread in tins. Their chocks were held in position by a bolt in the usual way and the ship's carpenter was instructed when making his report to me in the morning to report: "Davits and bolts free." When the bolt was knocked out a lift of three inches was all that was necessary to swing out those lifeboats. Now and again I had a test, generally at eight o'clock in the morning at the change of watches, and I managed to bring things to a point when the whole operation took seven minutes from the time of the order: "Both watches. Out lifeboats," to the moment when they were swung back and landed again in their chocks; the second mate taking charge of the starboard and the senior apprentice (acting third of the port side. This for a merchant ship was quite as goods as could be expected and would have, met almost any emergency short of sudden disaster. In the Channel and between the chops of the Channel and the Western Islands (either homeward or

outward bound), on the first appearance of thick weather with a moderate sea, it was a standing order that the officer of the watch immediately after calling the captain was to swing these boats outboard ready for lowering. In that position they remained, weather permitting, till the fog cleared.

I have entered into those details because from the nature of things there can be very few sailing-ship officers left now who have had the experience of the care of upwards of a hundred people on board a 1300 ton ship. How far the boys should be given an insight into the stowage on a large single hold I am not prepared to say. The

proper stowage of a sailing ship was an extremely important part of her preparation for sea, affecting her sailing powers, thacomfort of everybody on board, and even her absolute safety. The stowage of a subdivided hold of a large steamship is from the very nature of things a much less nice matter. It is also different in its nature, since the order of the ports of call is a paramount consideration in the disposition of a steamship's cargo. But an insight into the old conditions cannot do any harm and may be found useful on occasion.

Next I venture to offer the suggestion that the ship should have no auxiliary propulsion of any kind. Let her be a sailing ship. I don't exactly know how this may affect the rate of insurance, but I assure you that a very few years ago, well within the life of the man who is addressing you now, nobody thought a sailing ship less safe than a steamship. A ship's safety, apart from the "Act of God," rests in the hands of the men who are aboard of her, from the highest to the lowest in their different degrees. Machinery, perse, will not make a ship more safe, and the saved space would be useful for other purposes.

The ship will have, of course, to make use of tugs at the end of her passages. This will afford the cadets an opportunity to get an insight into the various points of seamanship connected with the operations of towage. The mere handling of steel and other kinds of hawsers will by itself give them valuable practice.

General Remarks: Finally I beg leave to touch upon the actual number of people on board. Mr. Laurence Holt's letter speaks of 60 to 80 cadets. I should suggest that the lesser number should be adopted. And even less than 60 if possible. What I have in my mind is the possibility of some accidents (which may happen to the best ship afloat) and its effect on the public mind. Regard ought to be paid also to the facility of getting a lesser number of people cut a sinking ship or saving them all in case of a shipwreck.

I have assumed that the period of training would be eighteen months. This «s the case of a Conway boy would work out his apprenticeship as follows: One year sea service allowed for Conway training; one year and in half in the sailing ship; the last year and a half as apprentice or cadet in a steamship.

In case of boys joining straight from a school on shore I suppose they would be kept for two and a half years on board the sailing vessel and finish their time in steam.

I don't touch on the point of navigational studies, for which no doubt a provision will be made. I will only remark that the greatest care and accuracy should be required from the cadets acting as assistant officers of the watch (and generally from ail senior boys) in keeping the ship's dead reckoning. This is a point of seamanship rather than navigation.

The ship, whether at anchor or alongside the quay, ought to offer that aspect of finished smartness alow and aloft that a training ship should have. It must be remembered that wherever she goes she will be representing the entire maritime community of the Port of Liverpool, employers and employed, shipowners and seamen.

The cadets going ashore on leave should always wear the ship's uniform, unless specifically invited to play games. The ship will no doubt have a football team and a cricket eleven.

A harbour watch (as distinguished from anchor watch), composed of one senior and two junior cadets, should be kept. And, generally, a proper amount of formality should be observed in the ship's routine both at sea and in port. It is conducive to self-respect in all ranks.

The Loss of the Dalgonar

To the Editor of the London Mercury SIR,

Since you have invited comments from nautical readers on a certain obscure passage in the 'True Story" printed in your September number, I will refer here to the point raised by Mr. L.C. Gane and to some other mistakes of minor importance. Not that I think they matter in the least for your readers, who, in any case, would have perceived the great quality of the narrative.

The passage queried by Mr. L.C. Gane, quite justifiably, runs as follows:

"At noon wore ship ... 7 p.m. wind and sea increasing, took in the mizzen fore upper topsail. 11 p.m. wind and sea still increasing, took in the mizzen and main upper topsails.0

The italicized words have, nautically speaking, no sense; the first four absolutely, the second five in relation to the first statement; since it is obvious that the mizzen upper topsail could not have been taken in twice.

These are obviously slips of the pen or errors of transcription. The first statement evidently was meant for: 'Took in the mizzen and fore upper topsails," the word missing in your text being the "and" after the word "mizzen." The ship then was carrying her foresail, lower fore-topsail, lower and upper main-topsail and lower mizzen-topsail. At 11 p.m., the gale still increasing, the sails taken in were the "mizzen lowerand main upper topsails," the word missing in the phrase as it stands in the text being the word "lower" after the word "mizzen." Thus, at 11 p.m. the ship was reduced down to her foresail and the fore and main lower topsails, which was a possible and seamanlike canvas for her to carry in then state of the weather. I cannot, however, defend myself from the impression conveyed by the narrative and also from what happened afterwards, that the foresail was carried on her too long. That large piece of canvas must have had the effect (at least at times) of forcing the ship one and a half or perhaps two knots through the water — for no object

The Loss of the Dalgonar

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that I can see. And there was the danger. But it is easy to be wise after the event!

The paragraph queried by Mr. Gane contains also a printing error: the plural usM should come out of the word "foresails." A ship has got only one foresail.

As to other minor corrections, the words "main draft" in the opening paragraph of the story should be 1mean draft, "as is obvious from the inspection of the figures. The draught of water is a formal logbook entry in any ship about to proceed to sea. Another misprint (on page 483) consists in a superfluous letter. The line runs: "and tve/?squared-in the main and crossjack yards, etc., etc." The "b" got in there by mistake. It should, of course, run: "and we squared-in the main, etc.," in what is a correct description of wearing ship, which was the last manoeuvre attempted before the Dalgonarbecame unmanageable.

On the next page the meaningless word printed as "nil" should, of course, be "rail."

I agree with all my heart with the editorial note heading the story. There can be nothing finer or more simple. The crew of the Daigonarbehaved as well as I have ever seen the crew of a British merchant ship behave in a critical situation, and they deserve fully the encomiums and blessings Mr. Mull, the Chief Officer, gives to them in his report written on board the Loire. A tribute of admiration is due, too, to the captain of the French ship for his humane determination to save those men, and for the display of seamanlike resolution and skill in maintaining his ship in position for so long in such desperate weather. Nobody but a seaman can appreciate the risks and the difficulty of the task, and the severe strain put on the endurance of the crew and officers of the Loire in sheer physical exertions, in unremitting vigilance and plucky seamanship, which enabled them to remain by and finally to take off the crew of the Daigonar.

Yours, etc., Joseph Conrad.

Travel

A Preface to Richard Curle's "Into the East"

There is no fate so uncertain as the fate of books of travel. They are the most assailable of all men's literary productions. The man who writes a travel book delivers himself more than any other into the hand of his enemies. The popularizing scientific writer's position is much more secure. His very subject is, properly speaking, marvellous in itself, and for that reason the intelligent multitude swallows it eagerly, or at least receives it with open mouth, and forms its own amazing conclusions. A writer of fiction — well! — he romances all the time, and the truth he has in him being disguised in various garments, from gold mantles to rags, is almost beyond the reach of criticism. All really he has got to attend to is grammar and punctuation. Metaphysics, of course, are simply intoxicating for those who like that way of killing our appointed time in this valley of tears. But as to those whose fancy leads them to investigate more or less profoundly that same valley... !

But after all a traveller is very much to be envied. He is to be envied for the instinct that prompts him, for the courage that sustains him. He is to be admired for enduring a spectacle almost intolerably gorgeous and varied, but with only hints, here and there, of dramatic scenes, with, practically, no star actors in it, with the knowledge that the curtain will not fall for months an months to come; and that he must play the exacting part of a spectator of those human characteristics and activities, in their picturesque, ugly, or savage settings, without, so to speak, the prospect of going home to bed presently. Imagine a lover of drama and of stage effects forced to sleep in his very stall, and every day, opening his eyes upon a never-ceasing performance. The taste for that sort of thing may well be envied as evidence of capacity for mental and physical resistance, not only against the strain of all the "things that seem to be," but against one's own weakness. Perhaps that is the reason why the Arabs, racially great travellers and great lovers of wonders, invented the proverb, "Travelling is victory," which stands as the motto of this

book. It expresses, indeed, a romantic conception. But there is a soberness of temperament in the Arab race which has prevented it from rushing exultingly into the writing of travel books. Of course, I am an ignorant person, from circumstances which it would not be to my advantage to disclose, but I can only call to mind one Arab traveller who has written a book; and surely if there had been shoals of them I would have heard of another.

Those people did much of their travelling sword in hand and with the name of the One God on their lips. But theirs were personally conducted parties, as destructive to the peace and the spiritual character of places they visited as any crowd from a tourist agency invading the shades of Vallombrosa. Let us forget the Arabs as well as their successors who are achieving victory every year at the price of so many pounds per head for a certain number of days. They demand neither our admiration nor our pity.

Nowadays many people encompass the globe. That kind of victory became to a certain extent fashionable for some years after the piercing of the Isthmus of Suez. Multitudes rushed through that short cut with blank minds and, alas, also blank notebooks where the megalomania, from which we ail more or less suffer, got recorded in the shape of "Impressions." The inanity of the mass of travel books the Suez Canal is responsible for took the proportions of an enormous and melancholy joke. For it was a mournful sight to see so many people giving themselves away. Their books covered private shelves and the tables of cabinets de lecture in a swarm more devastating to the world's freshness of impression than a swarm of locusts in a field of young corn. When that visitation began I was quite a boy and

in my innocence I read them all, or, at least, all I could lay my hands on. Women, single or in pairs, fashionable couples, professors of intense gravity, facetious business men — I read all their travel books, including even Baron Hubner's "Voyage Round the World," which, I should think, remains unequalled to this day.

That category of travellers with their parrot-like remarks, their strange attempts at being funny, and their lamentable essays in seriousness has apparently passed away. Or perhaps they only print

their books for circulation amongst friends. I suspect, however, they have ceased to write simply because there are too many of them. They do not appear as travellers even to the most naive minds and perhaps even to their own minds. They are simply an enormous company of people who go round the world for a change and rest, either suffering from overwork (whatever that may mean) or from neurasthenia. And I am sure my best wishes go with them for an easy and radical recovery. Steamship companies love them.

Sporting travellers form a class by themselves. They mostly write for other sportsmen, though I must confess that their books hold for me even now some fascination. They are apt to grow monotonous in the descriptive statistics of slaughter and as to the shortcomings of their "boys." Also in their admiration for their trackers, who seem all to have been made from the same pattern. I have noticed them adopting of late years a half-apologetic tone about their exploits; whereas the men of twenty-five years ago, with their much less perfect weapons and their big records, were frankly exulting. Frankness is a virtue I like. I would respect the modern attitude more if I were sure of its absolute genuineness. Moderation in game killing in enforced now by many regulations; but on considering how easy it is not to shoot an antelope one becomes slightly doubtfully of the perfect candour of men who travel thousands of miles in dreary steamboats and uncomfortable primitive trains for sport. On the other hand, I admit that a sportsman who would consistently miss every antelope would be an extremely uninteresting person. The world of explorers and discovers, the heroes of my boyhood, has vanished almost to nothing in the nineteenth century. Some of them wrote the classics of travel, but no passage of years can dim my admiration for their selfless spirit and manly faithfulness to their task pursued in solitude or with a few devoted henchmen, persevered in through numberless day with death only a pace behind, but with a calm mind and a steady heart.

What about mere wanderers? — those individuals that one meets in various fairly well-known localities, but who come upon one round unexpected corners, often shabby and depressed, sometimes haggard and jaunty; with tales in their mouths of the

flattest description or of a comic quality bordering on tears; with, now and then, a story that would frighten you to death if you were one of those men who don't know how to smile in time. I would class them as an outcast tribe if it did not sound so rude. And I would not be rude for anything to people capable of starting on their travels with their hands, and very little else besides, in their pockets. I have known amongst them men of ruffianly mental complexion, cultivating a truculent manner and a cold steady stare, who, if it were possible to bluff one's own destiny, might have been sitting in high places. And I ask myself, in my half-reluctant partiality for the class, whether some of them have not achieved it. But success disguises them at once and contemporary history gives them other names.

In my review of the categories of men who move about the earth I come now to the reaf travellers who wrote books, the protagonists of the modern travellers, in the same way, I may say, in which Hannon may be looked upon as a protagonist of the discovers and the circumnavigators of the globe. Only the Periplus was probably a dreary official report. At any rate if has not come down to us. The outstanding figure amongst those men who dedicated their books of travel to popes and emperors is Marco Polo, with his meticulous descriptive gift, his cautions credulity, his eye for splendour and his historian's rather than a traveller's temperament. He gave his readers what the readers of that day wanted, historical facts in a foreign and gorgeous atmosphere. But the time for such books of travel is past on this earth girt about with cables, with an atmosphere made restless by the waves of ether, lighted by that sun of the twentieth century under which there is nothing new left now, and but very little of what may still be called obscure.

The day of many-volumed "Journeys, through or to," of "Relations of this or that" (and much charm and ability some of them had), the days of heroic travel are gone; unless, of course, in the newspaper sense, in which heroism like everything else in the world becomes as common if not as nourishing as our daily bread. There would be always a lady or a gentleman ready to discover with considerable fuss a bit of territory of, say, ten square miles, resembling exactly the surrounding and already explored lands; or

interview some new ruler, like a reflection in a dim and tarnished mirror of some real chieftain in the books of a hundred years ago; or marvel at a disagreeable fish of erocious habits which had been described already in some old-tirr e, simply worded, unsensational "Relation." But even this is a garr a which is losing its interest, and in a very little time will have come to an end. Presently there will be no backyard left in the heart of Central Africa that has not been peeped into by some person more or less commissioned for the purpose. The Nigeria of Barth, of Dhenham, of Clapperton, of Mungo Park, of other infinitely curious and profoundly inspired men, will be bristling with police posts, colleges, tramway poles, and all those improving things triumphantly recorded, and always with the romantic addition that, within twenty miles, the hills, or the forests, or the holes in the sand, or the depths of the jungle (that blessed word) are swarming with cannibal tribes miraculously restrained by one white man with two black soldiers and his native cook for all company. And the great cloud of fatuous daily photographs and even more fatuous descriptive chatter, under whose shadow no traveller could live, will brood over those seldom-visited places of the world that, despoiled of their old black soul of mystery, have not yet acquired its substitute, which will be marvellously piebald when it comes.

This moment of ill-humour with "thing as they are becoming" is of course perfectly unreasonably and even perverse, which is worse: Jt would not deserve to be tolerated except for its inherent piety. As a matter of fact I have been thinking for a moment of the dead, of the great and good travellers loved in my boyhood, as I laid aside the MS. of this modern traveller who by publishing it has delivered himself to his enemies. He is very modern, for he is fashioned by the conditions of an explored earth in which the latitudes and longitudes having been recorded once for all have become things of no importance, in the sense that they can no longer appeal to the spirit of adventure, inflame no imagination, lead no one up to the very gates of mortal danger.

These basic facts of geography having been ascertained by the observations of heavenly bodies, the glance of the modern traveller contemplating the much-surveyed earth beholds in fact a

world in a state of transition; very different in this from the writers, of travel books of Marco Polo's time, who in their conscientious narratives seem to progress amongst immutable wonders, to feed their curiosity on a consistency of the splendid and the bizarre, presented to their eyes to stare at, to their minds to moralize upon.

And those things, which stand as if imperishable in the pages of old books of travel, are all blown away, have vanished as utterly as the smoke of the travellers' camp fires in the icy night air of the Gobi Desert, as the smell of incense burned in the temples of strange gods, as the voices of Asiatic statesmen speculating with the cruel wisdom of past ages on matters of peace and war.

Nothing obviously strange remains for our eyes now. The Khan of Tartary's court ceremonies were certainly marvellous in quite a different sense from the procedure followed at Kuala Kangsar two years ago when the Sultan of Perak was invested with the K.C.M.G. by the Governor of the Straits Settlements. This modern traveller describes it all in less words than Marco Polo would have used paragraphs on such a striking occasion. It was curious for him to watch under the formal routine of official compliments the Malay prince? play up to British etiquette, while grafting it on their own ideas oi politeness, and wearing, he thought, a slightly ironical smile on their dark faces. And to think that only fifty years ago, after a certain amount of jungle and stockade fighting, the Sultan or Perak, or perhaps his brother ruler next door in Selangor, having listened attentively to a lecture from a British Admiral on the heinousness of a certain notable case of piracy, turned round quickly to his attending chiefs and to the silent throng of his Malay subjects, exclaiming, "Hear now, my people! Don't let us have any more of this little game." Those words ought to have been engraved in letters of gold on a marble monument at the mouth of the Jugra River; for from the moment they were pronounced dates the era of security for the poor folks of

the coast, for the fishermen and traders in the Straits of Malacca. The downfall of local piracy in fact. The world in transition!

Our very curiosities have changed, growing more subtle amongst the vanishing mysteries of the earth. Very appropriately

this modern traveller reclining on the verandah of the State Rest-house, after having watched the ceremonies of installation in the blaring of trumpets and the gorgeous bright colours of the throng, recalls the strong impression of, one might say, indifferent and rather contemptuous good-will between brown and white, and gives himself up to the vain (as he himself observes) occupation of speculating on the future of countries. But he does it not in the spirit of a statesman looking for political truth, but in the doubting mood of a traveller of our day who on the very threshold of the East has questioned himself as to the ultimate truth of travel; whether purchase it was more than the mastery of first impression; showed in the sanity of our outlook on the world modern traveller revolt against its facts but in the fiered himself to his whole, or in the conformity ... he is fashioned by the and the mental reiplored earth in which the latitudes. It is this mood which men recorded once for all have inner promptings suggested by travel, which informs the felicitous rendering of his visual impressions. This it is that forces him, while looking out into the night from the deck of an Irrawaddy flotilla steamer, to admit to himself man's secret antagonism to the wilderness; or during his few hours' stay in Bhamo, a town on the very frontier of the Chinese enigma, where caravans incessantly come and go through mysterious valleys and where people live on rumours from day to day, to absorb its spirit of secrecy and waiting and hear suddenly around him "the whisper of innumerable hills passing on one to another the restless murmur of men's hearts." Very modern in impressions, in appreciations, in curiosities, and in his very love of the mother earth, of whose children he has written subtly and tenderly in some three volumes of characteristic tales; a traveller of our day, condemned to make his discoveries on beaten tracks, he looks on, sensitive, meditative, with delicate perceptions and a gift for expression, alive to the saving grace of human and historical associations; and while pursuing amongst the men busy with ascertained facts the riddles presented by a world in transition, he seems to have captured for us the spirit of modern travel itself.

Stephen Crane

In truth I had never expected the biography of Stephen Crane to appear in my lifetime. My immense pleasure was affected by the devastating touch of time which like a muddy flood covers under a mass of daily trivialities things of value: moments of affectionate communion with kindred spirits, words spoken with the careless freedom of perfect confidence, the deepest emotions of joy an sorrow

— together with such things of merely historical importance as the recollection of dates, for instance. After hearing from Mr. Beer of his difficulties in fixing certain dates in the history of Stephen Crane's life. I discovered that I was unable to remember with any kind of precision the initial date of our friendship. Indeed, life is but a dream

— especially for those of us who have never kept a diary or possessed a notebook in our lives.

In this extremity. I had recourse to another friend of Stephen Crane, who had appreciated him intuitively almost as soon as I did myself and who is woman of excellent memory. My wife's recollection is that Crane and I met in London in October, 1897, and that he came to see us for the first time in our Essex home in the following November.

I have mentioned in a short paper written two years ago that it was Mr. S.S. Pawling, partner in the publishing firm of Mr. Heinemann, who brought us together. It was done at Stephen Crane's. At that time the facts we knew about each other were that we both had the same publisher in England. The only other fact I knew about Stephen Crane was that he was quite a young man. I had, of course, read his "Red Badge of Courage," of which people were writing and talking at that time. I certainly did not know that he had the slightest notion of my existence, or that he had seen a single line (there were not many of them then) of my writing. I can safely say that I earned this precious friendship by something like ten months of strenuous work with my pen. It took me just that time to write "The Nigger of the Narcissus," working at what I always considered a very high pressure. It was on the ground of the authorship of that book that Crane wanted to meet me. Nothing could have been more flattering

than to discover that the author of 'The Red Badge of Courage" appreciated my effort to present a group of men held together by a common loyalty and a common perplexity in a struggle not with human enemies, but with the hostile conditions testing their faithfulness to the conditions of their own calling.

Apart from the imaginative analysis of his own temperament tried by the emotions of a battlefield, Stephen Crane dealt in his book with the psychology of the mass — the army; while I — in mine — had been dealing with the same subject on a much smaller scale and in more specialized conditions — the crew of a merchant ship, brought to the test of what I may venture to call the moral problem of conduct. This may be thought a very remote connection between these two works and the idea may seen too far-fetched to be mentioned here; but that was my undoubted feeling at the time. It is a fact that I considered Crane, by virtue of his creative experience with "The Red Badge of Courage," as eminently fit to pronounce a judgment on my first consciously planned attempt to render the truth of a phase of life in the terms of my own temperament with all the sincerity of which I was capable.

I had, of course, my own opinion as to what I had done; but I doubted whether anything of my ambitiously comprehensive aim would be understood. I was wrong there; but my doubt was excusable, since I myself would have been hard put to it if requested to give my complex intentions the form of a concise and definite statement. In that period of misgivings which so often follows an accomplished task I would often ask myself, who in the world could be interested in such a thing? It was after reading "The Red Badge," which came into my hands directly after its publication in England, that I said to myself: "Here's a man who may understand — if he ever sees the book; though of course that would not mean

that he would like it." I do not mean to say that I looked towards the author of 'The Red Badge" as the only man in the world. It would have been stupid and ungrateful. I had the moral support of one or two intimate friends and the solid fact of Mr. W.E. Henley's acceptance of my tale for serial publication in the NewReviewXo give me confidence, while I awaited the larger verdict.

It seems to me that in trying to recall my memories of Stephen Crane I have been talking so far about myself; but that is unavoidable, since this Introduction, which I am privileged to write, can only trace what is left on earth of our personal intercourse, which was even more short and fleeting than it may appear from the record of dates. October, 1897 — May, 1900. And out of that beggarly tale of months must be deducted the time of his absence from England during the Spanish-American War, and of his visit to the United States shortly before the beginning of his last illness. Even when he was in England our intercourse was not so close and frequent as the warmth of our friendship would have wished it to be. We both lived in the country and, though not very far from each other, in different countries. I had my work to do, always in conditions which made it a matter of urgency. He had his own tasks and his own visions to attend to. I do not think that he had more friendships to claim him than I, but he certainly had more acquaintances and more calls on his time.

This was only natural. It must be remembered that as an author he was my senior, as I used to remind him now and then with affected humility which always provoked his smiles. He had a quiet smile that charmed and frightened one. It made you pause by something revelatory it cast over his whole physiognomy, not like a ray but like a shadow. I often asked myself what it could be, that quality that checked one's care-free mood, and now I think I have had my answer. It was the smile of a man who knows that his time will not be long on this earth.

I would not for a moment wish to convey the impression of melancholy in connection with my memories of Stephen Crane. I saw his smile first over the tablecloth in a restaurant. We shook hands with intense gravity and a direct stare at each other, after the manner of two children told to make friends. It was under the encouraging gaze of Sydney Pawling, who, a much bigger man than either of us and possessed of a deep voice, looked like a grownup person entertaining two strange small boys — protecting and slightly anxious as to the experiment. He knew very little of either of us. I was a new author and Crane was a new arrival. It was the meeting of The Red Badge" and 'The Nigger" in the presence of

their publisher; but as far as our personalities went we were three strangers breaking bread together for the first time. Yet it was as pleasantly easy a meal as any I can remember. Crane talked in his characteristic deliberate manner about Greece at war. I had already sensed the man's intense earnestness underlying his quiet surface. Every time he raised his eyes, that secret quality (for his voice was careless) of his soul was betrayed in a clear flash. Most of the true Stephen Crane was in his eyes, most of his strength at any rate, though it was apparent also in his other features, as, for instance, in the structure of his forehead, the deep solid arches under the fair eyebrows.

Some people saw traces of weakness in the lower part of his face. What I could see there was a hint of the delicacy of sentiment, of the inborn fineness of nature which this man, whose life had been anything but a stroll through a rose-garden, had managed to preserve like a sacred heritage. I say heritage, not acquisition, for it was not and could not have been acquired. One could depend on it on all occasions; whereas the cultivated kind is apt to show ugly gaps under very slight provocation. The coarseness of the professedly delicate must be very amusing to the misanthrope. But Crane was no enemy of his kind. That sort of thing did not amuse him. As to his own temper, it was proof against anger and scorn, as I can testify, having seen him both angry and scornful, always, quietly, on fitting occasions. Contempt and indignation never broke the surface of his moderation, simply because he had no surface. He was all through of the same material, incapable of affectation of any kind, of any pitiful failure of generosity for the sake of personal advantage, or even from sheer exasperation which must find its relief.

Many people imagined him a fiery individuality. Certainly he was not cold-blooded. But his was an equable glow, morally and temperamentally. I would have said the same of his creative power (I have seen him sit down before a blank sheet of paper, dip his pen, write the first line at once and go on

without haste and without pause for a couple of hours), had he not confined to me that his mentality did flag at times. I do not think it was more than every writer is familiar with at times. Another man would have talked of his "failing

inspiration." It is very characteristic of Crane that I have never heard him use that word when talking about his work.

His phraseology was generally of a very modest cast. That unique and exquisite faculty, which Edward Garnett, another of his friends, found in his writing — "of disclosing an individual scene by an odd simile" — was not apparent in his conversation. It was interesting, of course, but its charm consisted mainly in the freshness of his impressions, set off by an acute simplicity of view and expressed with an amusing deliberation. Superabundance of words was not his failing when communing with those he liked and felt he could trust. With the other kind of "friends" he followed the method of a sort of suspended silence. On a certain occasion (it was at Brede Place), after two amazingly conceited idiots had gone away, I said to him, "Stevie, you brood like a distant thundercloud." He had retired early to the other end of the room, and from there had sent out, now and then, a few words, more like the heavy drops of rain that precede, the storm than growls of thunder. Poor Crane, it he could took black enough at times, never thundered; though I have no doubt he could been dangerous if he had liked. There always seemed to be something (not timidity) which restrained him, not from within but, I could not help fancying, from outside, with an effect as of a whispered memento morim the ear of a reveller not lost to the sense of grace.

That of course was a later impression. It must be stated clearly that I know very little of Stephen Crane's life. We did not feel the need to tell each other formally the story of our lives. That did not prevent us from being very intimate and also very open with each other from the first. Our affection would have been "everlasting," as he himself qualified it, had not the jealous death intervened with her cruel capriciousness by striking down the younger man. Our intimacy was really too close to admit of indiscretions; not that he did not speak amusingly of his experiences and of his hardships, and warmly of the men that helped him in his early days, like Mr. Hamlin Garland for instance, or men kindly encouraging to him, like Mr. Howells. Many other names he used to utter lovingly have been forgotten by me after so many years.

It is fact that I heard more of his adventures than of his trials; privations, and difficulties. I know he had many. He was the least recriminatory of men (though one of the most sensitive, I should say), but, in any case, nothing I could have learned would have shaken the independent judgment I had formed for myself of his trust worthiness as a man and a friend. Though the word is discredited now and may sound pretentious, I will say that there was in Crane a strain of chivalry which made him safe to trust with one's life. To be recognizably a man of honour carries no immunity against human weaknesses, but comports more rigid limitations in personal relations than the status of an "honourable man," however recognizable that too may be. Some men are "honourable" by courtesy, others by the office they hold, or simply by belonging to some popular assembly, the election to which is not generally secured by a dignified accuracy of statement and a scrupulous regard for the feelings of others. Many remain honourably (because of their great circumspection in the conduct of their affairs) without holding within themselves any of these restraints which are inherent in the character of a man of honour, however weak or luckless he may be.

I do not know everything about the strength of Crane's circumspection, but I am not afraid of what the biography which follows may disclose to us; though I am convinced that it will be free from hypocritical reservations. I think I have understood Stephen Crane, and from my too short acquaintance with his biographer I am confident he will receive the most humane and sympathetic treatment. What I discovered very early in our acquaintance was that Crane had not the face of a lucky man. That certitude came to me at our first meeting while I sat opposite him listening to his simple tales of Greece, while S.S. Pawling presided at the initiatory feast — friendly and debonair, looking solidly anchored in the stream of life, and very reassuring, like a big, prosperous ship to the sides of which we two in our tossing little barks could hook on for safety. He was interested in the tales too; and the best proof of

it is that when he looked at his watch and jumped up, saying, "I must leave you two now," it was very near four o'clock. Nearly a whole afternoon wasted, for an English business man.

No such consideration of waste or duty agitated Crane and myself. The sympathy that, even in regard of the very few years allotted to our friendship, may be said to have sprung up instantaneously between us, was the most undemonstrative case of that sort in the last century. We not only did not tell each other of it (which would have been missish), but even without entering formally into a previous agreement to remain together, we went out and began to walk side by side in the manner of two tramps without home, occupation, or care for the next night's shelter. We certainly paid no heed to direction. The first thing I noticed were the Green Park railings, when to my remark that he had seen no war before he went to Greece, Crane made answer: "No. But The Red Badge' is all right." I assured him that 1 never had doubted it; and, since the title of the work had been pronounced for the first time, feeling I must do something to show I had read it, I said shyly: "I like your General." He knew at once what I was alluding to, but said not a word. Nothing could have been more tramp-like than our silent pacing, elbow to elbow, till, after we had left Hyde Park Corner behind us, Crane uttered with his quiet earnestness the words: "I like your young man — I can just see him." Nothing could have been more characteristic of the depth of our three-hour-old intimacy than that each of us should have selected for praise the merest by the way vignette of a minor character.

This was positively the only allusion we made that afternoon to our immortal works. Indeed we talked very little of them at any time, and then always selecting some minor point for particular mention; which, after all, is not a bad way of showing an affectionate appreciation of a piece of work done by a friend. A stranger would have expected more, but, in a manner of speaking, Crane and I had never been strangers. We took each other's work for granted from the very first, I mean from the moment we had exchanged those laudatory remarks alongside the Green Park railings. Henceforth mutual recognition kept to the standard. It consisted often of an approving grunt, sometimes of the mention of some picked-out paragraph, or of a line or only of a few words that had caught our fancy and would, for a time, be applied more or less aptly to the

turns of our careless, or even serious, talks.

Thus, for instance, there was a time when I persecuted poor Crane with the words "barbarously abrupt." They occur in that marvellous story, 'The Open Boat," and are applied by him to the waves of the sea (as seen by men tossing in a small dinghy) with an inspired audacity of epithet which was one of Crane's gifts that gave me most delight. How amazingly apt these words are where they stand, anybody can see by looking at that story, which is altogether a big thing, and has remained an object of my confirmed admiration. I was always telling Crane that this or that was "barbarously abrupt," or begging him not to be so "barbarously abrupt" himself, with a keen enjoyment of the incongruity; for no human being could be less abrupt than Crane. As to his humanity (in contradistinction to barbarity), it was a shining thing without a flaw. It is possible that he may have grown at length weary of my little joke, but he invariably received it with a smile, thus proving his consistent humanity towards his kind. But, after all, he too liked that story of his, of four men in a very small boat, which by the deep and simple humanity of presentation seems somehow to illustrate the essentials of life itself, like a symbolic tale. It opens with a phrase that anybody could have uttered, but which, in relation to what is to follow, acquires the poignancy of a meaning almost universal. Once, much later in our acquaintance, I made use of it to him. He came on a flying visit to Pent Farm where we were living then. I noticed that he looked harassed. I, too, was feeling for the moment as if things were getting too much for me. He lay on the couch and I sat on a chair opposite. After a longish silence, in which we both could have felt how uncertain was the issue of life envisaged as a deadly adventure in which we were both engaged like two men trying to keep afloat in a small boat, I said suddenly across the width of the mantelpiece:

"None of them knew the colour of the sky."

He raised himself sharply. The words had struck him as familiar, though I believe he failed to place them at first. "Don't you know that quotation?" I asked. (These words form the opening sentence of his tale.) The startled expression passion off his face. "Oh, yes," he

said quietly, and lay down again. Truth to say, it was a time when neither he nor I had the leisure to look up idly at the sky. The waves just then were too "barbarously abrupt."

I do not mean to say that it was always so. Now and then we were permitted to snatch a glance at the colour of the sky. But it is a fact that in the history of our essentially undemonstrative friendship (which is nearly as difficult to recapture as a dream) that first long afternoon is the most care-free instant, and the only one that had a character of enchantment about it. It was spread out over a large portion of central London. After the Green Park the next thing I remember are the Kensington Gardens, where under the lofty and historical trees I was vouchsafed a glimpse of the low mesquite bush overspreading the plum-coloured infinities of the great Taxes plains. Then after a long tramp amongst an orderly multitude of grimy brick house — from which the only things I carried off were the impressions of the coloured rocks of Mexico (or was it Arizona?), and my first knowledge of a locality called the Painted Desert — there came suddenly Oxford Street. I don't know whether the inhabitants of London were keeping indoors or had gone into the country that afternoon, but I don't remember seeing any people in the streets except for a figure, now and then, unreal, too, was stopped; yet, it seems, not entirely, because I remember Crane seizing my arm and jerking me back on the pavement with the calm remark: "you will get run over." I love to think that the dear fellow had saved my life and that it seemed to amuse him. As to London's enormous volume of business, all I know is that one A.B.C. shop had remained open. We went through the depressing ceremony of having tea there; but our interest in each other mitigated its inherent horrors and gave me a good idea of Crane's stoicism. At least I suppose we had tea, otherwise they would not have let us sit there so long. To be left alone was all we wanted. Neither of us had then a club to entertain the other in. It will give a good notion of our indomitable optimism (on that afternoon) when I say that it was there, in those dismal surroundings, we reached the conclusion that though the world had grown old and weary, yet the scheme of creation remained as obscure as ever, and (from our own particular point of view) there was still

much that was interesting to expect from gods and men.

As if intoxicated by this draught of hope we rolled out of that A.B.C. shop, but I kept my head sufficiently to guess what was coming and to send a warning telegram to my wife in our Essex home. Crane then was, I believe, staying temporarily in London. But he seemed to have no care in the world; and so we resumed our trampling — east and north and south again, steering through uncharted mazes the streets, forgetting to think of dinner but taking a rest here and there, till we found ourselves, standing in the middle of Piccadilly Circus, blinking at the lights like two authentic nightbirds. By that time we had been (in Tottenham Court Road) joined by Balzac. How he came in I have no idea. Crane was not given to literary curiosities of that kind. Somebody he knew, or something he had read, must have attracted lately his attention to Balzac. And now suddenly at ten o'clock in the evening he demanded insistently to be told in particular detail all about the "ComSdie Humaine," its contents, its scope, its plan, and its general significance, together with a critical description of Balzac's style. I told him hastily that it was just black on white; and for the rest, I said, he would have to wait till we got across to Monico's and had eaten some supper. I hoped he would forget Balzac and his "Comedie." But not a bit of it; and I had no option but to hold forth over the remnants of a meal, in the rush of hundreds of waiters and the clatter of tons of crockery, caring not what I said (for what could Stephen want with Balzac?), in the comfortable assurance that the Monstrous Shade, even if led by some strange caprice to haunt the long room of Monico's, did not know enough English to understand a single word I said. (wonder what Crane made of it all. He did not look bored, and it was eleven o'clock before we parted at the foot of that monumentally heavy abode of frivolity, the Pavilion, with just a hand-shake and a goodnight — no more — without making any arrangements for meeting again, as though we had lived in the same town from childhood and were sure to run across each other next day.

It struck me directly I left him that we had not even exchanged addresses; but I was not uneasy. Sure enough, before the month was out there arrived a post card (from Ravensbrook) asking whether

he might come to see us. He came, was received as an old friend, and before the end of the day conquered my wife's sympathy, as undemonstrative and sincere as his own au:et friendship that sprang

up between them was confirmed by the interest Crane displayed in our first child, a boy who came on the scene not quite two months afterwards. How strong was that interest on the part of Stephen Crane and his wife in the boy is evidenced by the fact that at the age of six weeks he was invited to come for a long visit to Ravensbrook. He was in fact impatiently expected there. He arrived in state, bringing with him not only his parents but also a young aunt, and was welcomed like a prince. This visit, during which I suffered from a sense of temporary extinction, is commenmorated by a group photograph taken by an artist summoned with his engine (regardless of expense) to Ravensbrook. Though the likenesses are not bad, it is a very awful thing. Nobody looks like him or herself in it. The best yet are the Crane dogs, a very important part of the establishment and quite conscious of it, belonging apparently to some order of outlandish animals I have ever met. They pervaded, populated, and filled the whole house. Whichever way one looked at any time, down the passage, up the stairs, into the drawing room, there was always a dog in sight. Had 1 been asked on the first day how many there were, I would have guessed about thirty. As a matter of fact there were only three, but I think they never sat down, except in Crane's study, where they had their entree at all hours.

A scratching would be heard at the door, Crane would drop his pen with alacrity to threw it open — and the dogs would enter sedately in single, taking a lot of time about it, too. Then the room would resound for a while with grunts, sniffs, yawns, heavy flops, followed by as much perhaps as three whole minutes of silence. Then the dogs would get up, one after another, never all together, and direct their footsteps to the door in an impressive and ominous manner. The first arrival waited considerately for the others before trying to attract attention by means of scratching on the bottom panel. Then, never before, Crane would raise his head, go meekly to the door — and the procession would file out at the slowest possible pace. The recurrent sedateness of the proceedings, the utter unconsciousness

of the dogs, dear. Stephen's absurd gravity while playing his part in those ceremonies, without ever a muscle of his face moving, were irresistibly, exasperatingly funny. I tried to preserve my gravity (or at least to keep calm), with fair success. Only one afternoon on the fifth or sixth repetition I could not help bursting into a loud interminable laugh, and then the dear fellow asked me in all innocence what was the matter. I managed to conceal my nervous irritation from him, and he never learned the secret of that laugh in which there was a beginning of hysteria.

If the definition that man is a laughing animal be true, then
Crane was neither one nor the other; indeed he was but a hurried
visitor on this earth on which he had so little reason to be joyous.
I might say that I never heard him laugh, except in connection with
the baby. He loved children; but has friendship with our child was
of the kind that put our mutual sentiment, by comparison, somewhere
within the arctic region. The two could not be compared; at least I
have never detected Crane stretched full length and sustained on
his elbows on a grass plot, in order to gaze at me; on the other hand,
this was his usual attitude of communion with the small child — with
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him who was called the Boy and whose destiny it was to see more war before he came of age than the author of 'The Red Badge" had time to see in ail the allotted days of his life. In the gravity of its disposition the baby came quite up to Crane; yet those two would sometimes fined something to laugh at in each other. Then there would be silence, and glancing out of the low window of my room I would see them, very still, staring at each other with a solemn understanding that needed no words, or perhaps was beyond words altogether. I could not object on any ground to their profound intimacy, but I do no see why Crane should have developed such an unreasonable suspicion as to my paternal efficiency. He seemed to be everlastingly taking the boy's part. I could not see that the baby was being oppressed, hectored over, or in any way deprived of its rights, or ever wounded in its feeling by me; but Crane seemed always to nurse some vague unexpressed grievance as to my conduct. I was inconsiderate. For instance — why could I not get a dog for the boy? One day he made quite a scene about it. He

seemed to imply I should drop everything and go look for a dog. I sat under the storm and said nothing. At last an appeal to first principles, but for an answer I pointed at the windows and said: "Behold the boy." ... He was sitting on a rug spread on the grass, with his little red stocking-cap very much over one eye (a fact of which he seemed unaware), and propped round with many pillows on account of his propensity to roll over on his side helplessly. My answer was irresistible. This is one of the few occasions on which I heard Stephen Crane laugh outright. He dropped his preaching on the dog theme and went out to the boy while I went on with my work. But he was strangely incorrigible. When he came back after an hour or so, his first words were. "Joseph, I will teach your boy to ride." I closed the offer at once — but it was not to be. He was not given the time.

The happiest mental picture my wife and I preserve of Crane is on the occasion of our first visit to Brede Place when he rode to meet us at the Park gate. He looked at his best on horseback. On that day he must have been feeling well. As usual, he was happy in the saddle. As he went on trotting by the side of the open trap I said to him: "If you give the boy your seat I will be perfectly satisfied." I knew this would please him; and indeed this face remained wreathed in smiles all the way to the front door. He looked about him at that bit of the world, down the green slopes and up the brown fields, with an appreciative serenity and the confident bearing of a man who is feeling very sure of the present and of the future. All because he was looking at life from the saddle, with a good morning's work behind him. Nothing more is needed to give a man a blessed moment of illusion. The more I think of that morning, the more I believe it was just that; that it had been really been given me to see Crane perfectly happy for a couple of hours; and that it was under this spell that directly we arrived he led me impatiently to the room in which he worked when at Brede. After we got there he said to me, "Joseph, I will give you something." I had no idea what it would be, till I saw him sit down to write an inscription in a very slim volume. He presented it to me with averted head. It was 'The Black Riders." He had never spoken to me of his verse before. It was while

holding the book in my hand that I learned that they were written years before in America. I expressed my appreciation of them that afternoon in the usual half a dozen or dozen, words which we allowed ourselves when completely pleased with each other's work. When the pleasure was not so complete the words would be many. And that was a great waste of breath and time. I must confess that we were no critics, I mean temperamentally. Crane was even less of a critic than myself. Criticism is very much a matter of a vocabulary, very consciously used; with us it was the intonation that mattered. The tone of a grunt could convey as infinity of meaning between us.

The articulate literary conscience at our elbow was Edward Garnett. He, of course, was worth listening to. His analytical appreciation (or appreciative analysis) or Crane's art, in the London Academy of 17th December, 1898,1 goes to the root of the matter with Edward's almost uncanny insight, and a well-balanced sympathy with the blind, pathetic striving of the artist towards a complete realization of his individual gift. How highly Edward Garnett rated Crane's gift is recorded in the conclusions of that admirable and, within the limits of its space, masterly article of some two columns, where at the end are down such affirmative phrases as: The chief impressionist of the age."... "Mr. Crane's talent is unique"... and where he hails him as" the creator of fresh rhythms and phrases," while the very last words state confidently that:" Undoubtedly, of the young school it is Mr. Crane who is the genius — the others have their talents."

My part here being not that of critic but of private friend, all I will say is that I agreed warmly at the time with that article, which from the quoted phrases might be supposed a merely enthusiastic pronouncement, but on reading will be found to be based on that calm sagacity which Edward Garnett, for all his fiery zeal in the cause of letters, could always summon for the judgment of matters emotional — as all response to the various forms of art must be in the main. I had occasion to re-read it last year in its expanded form in a collection of literary essays of great, now almost historical, interest in the record of American and English imaginative literature. I found there a passage or two, not bearing precisely on Crane's

work but giving a view of his temperament, on which of course his art was based; and of the conditions, moral and materia!, under which he had to put forth his creative faculties and his power of steady composition. Of those matters, as a man who had the opportunity to look at Crane's life in England. I wish to offer a few remarks before closing my contribution to the memory of my friend.

I do not know that he was ever dunned for money and had to work under a threat of legal proceedings. I don't think he was ever dunned in the sense in which such a phrase is used about a spendthrift unscrupulous in incurring debts. No doubt he was sometimes pressed for money. He lived by his pen, and the prices he obtained were not great. Personally he was not extravagant; and I will not quarrel with him for not choosing to live in a garret. The tenancy of Brede Place was held by him at a nominal rent. That glorious old place was not restored then, and the greatest part of it was uninhabitable. The Cranes had furnished in a modest way six or seven of the least dilapidated rooms, which even then looked bare and half empty. Certainly there was a horse, and at one time even two, but that luxury was not so very expensive at that time. One man looked after them. Riding was the only exercise open the Crane; and if he did work so hard, surely he was entitled to some relaxation, if only for the preservation of his unique talent.

His greatest extravagance was hospitality, of which I, too, had my share; often in the company, I am sorry to say, of men who after sitting at his board chose to speak of him and of his wife slightingly. Having some rudimentary sense of decency, their behaviour while actually under the Cranes' roof often produced on me a disagreeable impression. Once I ventured to say to him, "You are too good-natured, Stephen." He gave me one of his quiet smiles, that seemed to hint so poignantly at the vanity of all things, and after a period of silence remarked: "I am glad those Indians are gone." He was surrounded by men who, secretly envious, hostile to the real quality of his genius (and a little afraid of it), were also in antagonism with the essential fineness of his nature. But enough of them. Pu/vis et umbra sunt. I mean even those that may be alive yet. They were ever hardly anything else; one would have forgotten them if were not for the

legend (if one may dignify perfidious and contemptible gossip by that name) they created in order to satisfy that same obscure instinct of base humanity, which in the past would often bring against any exceptional man the charge of consorting with the devil. It was just as vague, just a senseless, and in its implications just as lying as the mediaeval kind. I have heard one of these "friends" hint before several other Philistines that Crane could not write his tales without getting drunk!

Putting aside the gross palpable stupidity of such a statement — which the creature' gave out as an instance of the artistic temperament — I am in a position to disclose what may have been the foundation of this piece of gossip. I have seen repeatedly Crane at work. A small jug of still smaller ale would be brought into the study at about then o'clock; Crane would pour out some of it into a glass and settle himself at the long table at which he used to write in Brede Place. I would take a book and settle myself at the other end of the same table, with my back to him; and for two hours or so not a sound would be heard in that room. At the end of that time Crane would say suddenly: "I won't do any more now, Joseph." He would have covered three of his large sheets with his regular, legible, perfectly controlled handwriting, with no more than a half-a-dozen erasures — mostly single words — in the whole lot. It seemed to me always a perfect miracle in the way of mastery over material and expression. Most of the ale would be still in the glass, and how flat by that time I don't like to think! The most amusing part was to see Crane, as if moved my some obscure sense of duty, drain the last drop of that untempting remnant before we left the room to stroll to and fro in front of the house while waiting for lunch. Such is the origin of some of these gleeful whispers making up the Crane legend of "unrestrained temperament." I have known various sorts of temperaments — some perfidious and some lying — but "unrestrained temperament' is mere parrot talk. It has no meaning. But it was suggestive. It was founded on Crane's visits to town, during which I more than once met him there. We used to spend afternoons and evenings together, and I did not see any of his supposed revels in progress; nor yet have I ever detected any after

effects of them on any occasion. Neither have I ever seen anybody who would own to having been a partner in those excesses — if only to the extent of standing by charitably — which would have been a

noble part to play. I daresay all those "excesses" amounted to very little more than the one in which he asked me to join him in the following letter. It is the only note I have kept from the very few which we exchanged. The reader will see why it is one of my most carefully preserved possessions.

Ravensbrook, Oxted, March 17 (1899).

My Dear Conrad:

I am enclosing you a bit of MS. under the supposition that you might like to keep it in remembrance of my warm and endless friendship for you. I am still hoping that you will consent to Stokes' invitation to come to that you will consent to Stokes' invitation to come to the Savage on Saturday night. Cannot you endure it? Give my affectionate remembrances to Mrs. Conrad and my love to the boy.

Yours always,

Stephen Crane.

P.S. You must accept says Cora — and I — our invitation to come home with me on Sat. night.

I joined him. We had a very amusing time with the Savages. Afterwards Crane refused to go home till the last train. Evidence of what somebody has called his "unrestrained temperament," no doubt. So we went and sat at Gatti's, I believe — unless it was in a Bodega which existed then in that neighbourhood — and talked. I have a vivid memory of this awful debauch because it was on that evening that Crane told me of a subject for a story — a very exceptional thing for him to do. He called it 'The Predecessor." I could not recall now by what capricious turns and odd associations of thought he reached the enthusiastic conclusion that it would make a good play, and that we must do it together. He wanted me to share in a certain success — "a dead sure thing," he said. His was an unrestrainedly generous temperament. But let that pass. I must have been specially

predisposed because I caught the infection at once. There and then we began to build up the masterpiece, interrupting each other eagerly, for, I don't know how it was, the air around us had suddenly grown thick with felicitous suggestions. We carried on this collaboration as far as the railway time-table would let us, and then made a break for the last train. Afterwards we did talk of our collaboration now and then, but no attempt at it was ever made. Crane had other stories to write; I was immersed deeply in "Lord Jim," of which I had to keep up the instalments in Blackwood's, difficulties in presenting the subject on the stage rose one after another before our experience. The general subject consisted in a man personating his "predecessor" (who had died) in the hope of winning a girl's heart. The scenes were to include a ranch at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, I remember, and the action, I fear, would have been frankly melodramatic. Crane insisted that one of the situations should present the man and the girl on a boundless plain standing by their dead ponies after a furious ride a truly Crane touch). I made some objections. A boundless plain in the light of a sunset could be got into back-cloth. I admitted; but I doubted whether we could induce the management of any London theatre to deposit two stuffed horses on its stage.

Recalling now those earnestly fantastic discussions, it occurs to me that Crane and I must have been unconsciously penetrated by a prophetic sense of the technique and of the very spirit of film-plays, of which even the name was unknown then to the world. But if gifted with prophetic sense, we must have been strangely ignorant of ourselves, since it must be obvious to any one who has read a page of our writings that a collaboration between us two could never have come to anything in the end — could never even have been begun. The project was merely the expression of our affection for each other. We were fascinated for a moment by the will-of-the-wisp of close artistic communion. It would in no case have led us into a bog. I flatter myself we both had too much regard for each other's gifts not to be clear-eyed about them. We would not have followed the lure very far. At the same time it cannot be denied that there were profound , if not extensive, similitudes in our temperaments which could create for a moment that fascinating illusion. It is not

to be regretted, for it had, at any rate, given us some of the most light-hearted moments in the clear but sober atmosphere of our intimacy. From the force of circumstances there could not be much sunshine in it. "None of them saw the colour of the sky!" And alas, it stood already written that it was the younger man who would fail to make a landing through the surf. So I am glad to have that episode

to remember, a brotherly serio-comic interlude, played under the shadow of coming events. But I would not have alluded to it at all if it had not come out in the course of my most interesting talk with the author of this biography, that Crane had thought it worth while to mention it in his correspondence, whether seriously or humorously, I know not. So here it is without the charm which it had for me, but which cannot be reproduced in the mere relation of its outward characteristics: a clear gleam on us two, succeeded by the Spanish-American War into which Crane disappeared like a wilful man walking into the depths of an ominous twilight.

The cloudy afternoon when we two went rushing all over London together was for him the beginning of the end. The problem was to find £60 that day, before the sun set, before dinner, before the "six-forty" train to Oxted, at once, that instant — lest peace should be declared and the opportunity or seeing a war be missed. I had not £60 to lend him. Sixty shillings was nearer my mark. We tried various offices but had no luck, or rather we had the usual luck of money-hunting enterprises. The man was either gone out to see about a dog, or would take no interest in the Spanish-American War. In one place the man wanted to know what was the hurry? He would have like to have forty-eight hours to think the matter over. As we came downstairs, Crane's white-faced excitement frightened me. Finally it occurred to me take him to Messrs. William Blackwoods & Sons' London office. There he was received in a most friendly way. Presently I escorted him to Charing Cross, where he took the train for home with the assurance that he would have the means to start "for the war" next day. That is the reason I cannot to this day read his tale, 'The Price of the Harness," without a pang. It has done nothing more deadly than pay his debt to Messrs. Blackwood; yet now and then I feel as though that afternoon I had led him by the

hand to his doom. But, indeed, I was only the blind agent of the fate that had him in her grip! Nothing could have held him back. He was ready to swim the ocean.

Thirteen years afterwards I made use, half consciously of the shadow of the primary idea of 'The Predecessor" in one of my short tales which were serialized in the Metropolitan Magazine. But in that tale the dead man in background is not a Predecessor but merely an assistant on a lonely plantation; and instead of the ranch, the mountains, and the plains, there is a cloud-capped island, a bird-haunted reef, and the sea. All this the mere distorted shadow of what we two used to talk about in a fantastic mood; but now and then, as I wrote, I had the feeling that he had the right to come and look over my shoulder. But he never came. I received no suggestions from him, subtly conveyed without words. There will never by any collaboration for us now. But I wonder, were he alive, whether he would be pleased with the tale. I don't know. Perhaps not. Or, perhaps, after picking up the volume with that detached air I remember so well and turning over page after page in silence, he would suddenly read aloud a line or two and then, looking straight into my eyes as was his wont on such occasions, say with all the intense earnestness of affection that was in him: "I — like — that, Joseph."

His War Book

A Preface to Stephen Crane's "The Reo Badge of Courage"

One of the most enduring memories of my literary life is the sensation produced by the appearance in 1895 of Crane's "Red Badge of Courage" in a small volume belonging to Mr. Heinemann's Pioneer Series of Modern Fiction — very modern fiction of that time, and upon the whole not devoid of merit.! have an idea the series was meant to give us shocks, and as far as my recollection goes there were, to use a term made familiar to all by another war, no "duds" in that small and lively bombardment. But Crane's work detonated on the mild din of that attack on our literary sensibilities with the impact and force of a twelve-inch shell charged with a very high explosive. Unexpected it fell amongst us; and its fall was followed by a great outcry.

Not of consternation. The energy of that projectile hurt nothing and no one (such was its good fortune), and delighted a good many. It delighted soldiers, men of letters, men in the street; it was welcomed by all lovers of personal expression as a genuine revelation, satisfying the curiosity of a word in which war and love have been subjects of song and story ever since the beginning of articulate speech.

Here we had an artist, a man not of experience but a man inspired, a seer with a gift for rendering the significant on the surface of things and with an incomparable insight into primitive emotions, who, in order to give us the image of war, had looked profound into his own breast. We welcomed him. As if the whole vocabulary of praise had been blown up sky-high by this missile from across the Atlantic, a rain of words descended on our heads, words well or ill chosen, chunks of pedantic praise and warm appreciation, clever words, and words of real understanding, platitudes, and felicities of criticism, but all as sincere in their response as the striking piece of work which set so many critical pens scurrying over the paper.

One of the most interesting, if not the most valuable, of printed criticisms was perhaps that of Mr. George Wyndham, soldier, man

of the world, and in a sense a man of letters. He went into the whole question of war literature, at any rate during the nineteenth century, evoking comparisons with the M6moireso\ General Marbot and the famous Diary of a Carairy Officer as records of a personal experience. He rendered justice to the interest of what soldiers themselves could tell us, but confessed that to gratify the curiosity of the potential combatant who lurks in most men as to the picturesque aspects and emotional reactions of a battle we must go to the artist with his Heaven-given faculty of words at the service of his divination as to what the truth of things is and must be. He comes to the conclusion that:

"Mr. Crane has contrived a masterpiece."

"Contrived" — that word of disparaging sound is the last word I would have used in connection with any piece of work by Stephen Crane. Who in his art (as indeed in his private life) was the least "Contriving" of men. But as to "masterpiece," there is no doubt that "The Red Badge of Courage" is that, if only because of the marvellous accord of the vivid impressionistic description of action on that woodland battlefield, and the imaged style of the analysis of the emotions in the inward moral struggle going on in the breast of one individual — the Young Soldier of the book, the protagonist of the monodrama presented to us in an effortless succession of graphic and coloured phrases.

Stephen Crane places his young Soldier in an untried regiment. And this is well contrived — if any contrivance there be in a spontaneous piece of work which seems to spurt and flow like a tapped stream from the depths of the writer's being. In order that the revelation should be complete, the Young Soldier has to be deprived of the moral support which he would have found in a tried body of men matured in achievement to the consciousness of its worth. His regiment had been tried by nothing but days of

waiting for the order to move; so many days that it and the Youth within it have come to think of themselves as merely "a part of a vast blue demonstration." The army had been lying camped near a river, idle and fretting, till the moment when Stephen Crane lays hold of it at dawn with masterly simplicity:" The cold passed reluctantly from the earth. ..." These

are the first words of the war book which was to give him his crumb of fame.

The whole of that opening paragraph is wonderful in the homely dignity of the indicated lines of the landscape, and the shivering awakening of the army at the break of the day before the battle. In the next, with a most effective change to racy colloquialism of narrative, the action which motivates, sustains and feeds the inner drama forming the subject of the book, begins with the Tall Soldier going down to the river to wash his shirt. He returns waving his garment above his head. He had heard at fifth-hand from somebody that the army is going to move tomorrow. The only immediate effect of this piece of news is that a Negro teamster, who had been dancing a jig on a wooden box in a ring of laughing soldiers, finds himself suddenly deserted. He sits down mournfully. For the rest, the Tall Soldier's excitement is met by blank disbelief, profane grumbling, an invincible incredulity. But the regiment is somehow sobered. One feels it, though no symptoms can be noticed. It does not know what a battle is, neither does the Young Soldier. He retires from the babbling throng into what seems a rather comfortable dugout and lies down with his hands over his eyes to think. Thus the drama begins.

He perceives suddenly that he had looked upon wars as historical phenomenons of the past. He had never believed in war in his own country. It had been a sort of play affair. He had been drilled, inspected, marched for months, till he has despaired " of ever seeing a Greek-likes struggle. Such were no more. Men were better or more timid. Secular and religious education had effaced the throat-grappling instinct, or else firm finance held in check the passions."

Very modern this touch. We can remember thoughts like these round about the year 1914. That Young Soldier is representative of mankind in more ways than one, and first of all in his ignorance. His regiment had listened to the tales of veterans, "tales of gray bewhiskered hordes chewing tobacco with unspeakable valour and sweeping along like the Huns." Still, he cannot put his faith in veterans' tales. Recruits were their prey. They talked of blood, fire, and sudden death, but much of it might have been lies. They were in no wise

to be trusted. And the question arises in no wise to be trusted. And the question arises before him whether he will or will not" run from a battle"? He does not know. He cannot know. A little panic fear enters his mind. He jumps up and asks himself aloud." Good Lord, what's the matter with me?" This is the first time his words are quoted, on this day before the battle. He dreads not danger, but fear itself. He stands before the unknown. He would like to prove to himself by some reasoning process that he will not "run from the battle." And in his unblooded regiment he can find no help. He is alone with the problem of courage.

In this he stands for the symbol of all untried men.

Some critics have estimated him a morbid case. I cannot agree to that. The abnormal cases are of the extremes; of those who crumple up at the first sight of danger, and of those of whom their fellows say "He doesn't know what fear is." Neither will I forget the rare favourites of the gods whose fiery spirit is only soothed by the fury and clamour of a battle. Of such was General Picton of Peninsular fame. But the lot of the mass of mankind is to know fear, the decent fear of disgrace. Of such is the Young Soldier of 'The Red Badge of Courage." He only seems exceptional because he has got inside of him Stephen Crane's imagination, and is presented to us with the insight and the power of expression of an artist whom a just and severe critic, on a review of all his work, has called the foremost impressionist of his time; as Sterne was the greatest impressionist, but in a different way, of his age.

This is a generalized, fundamental judgment. More superficially both Zola's "La Debacle and Tolstoi's "War and Peace" were mentioned by critics in connection with Crane's war book. But Zola's main concern was with the downfall of the imperial regime he fancied he was portraying; and in Tolstoi's book the subtle presentation of Rostov's squadorn under fire for the first time is a mere episode lost in a mass of other matter, like a handful of pebbles in a heap of sand. I could not see the relevancy. Crane was

concerned with elemental truth only; and in any case I think that as an artist he is non-comparable. He dealt with what is enduring, and was the most detached of men.

That is why his book is short. Not quite two hundred pages. Gems are small. This monodrama, which happy inspiration or unerring instinct has led him to put before us in narrative form, is contained between the opening words I have already quoted and a phrase on page 194 of the English edition, which runs: "He had been to touch the great death, and found that, after all, it was but the great death. He was a man."

On these words the action ends. We are only given one glimpse of the victories army at dusk, under the falling rain, "a procession of weary soldiers became a bedraggled train, despondent and muttering, marching with churning effort in a trough of liquid brown mud under a low wretched sky ...", while the last ray of the sun falls on the river through a break in the leaden clouds.

This war book, so virile and so full of gentle sympathy, in which not single declamatory sentiment defaces the genuine verbal felicity, welding analysis and description in a continuous fascination of individual style, had been hailed by the critics as the herald of a brilliant career. Crane himself very seldom alluded to it, and always with a wistful smile. Perhaps he was conscious that, like the mortally wounded Tall Soldier of his book, who, snatching at the air, staggers out into a field to meet his appointed death on the first day of battle

— while the terrified Youth and the kind Tattered Soldier stand by silent, watching with awe "these ceremonies a the place of meeting"

— it was his fate, too, to fall early in the fray.

John Galsworthy

When in the family's assembly at Timothy Forsyte's house there arose a discussion of Francie Forsyte's verses, Aunt Hester expressed her preference for the poetry of Shelly, Byron and Wordsworth, on the ground that, after reading works of these poets, "one felt that one had read a book." And the reader of Mr. Galsworthy's latest volume of fiction, whether in accord or in difference with the author's view of his subject, would feel that he had read a book.

Beyond that impression one perceives how difficult it is to get critical hold of Mr. Galsworthy's work. He gives you to opening. Defending no obvious thesis, setting up no theory, offering no cheap panacea, appealing to no naked sentiment, the author of "The Man of Property" disdains also the effective device of attacking insidiously the actors of his own drama, or rather of his dramatic comedy. This is because he does not write for effect, though his writing will be found effective enough for all that. This book is of a disconcerting honesty, backed by a discouraging skill. There is not a single phrase in it written for the sake of its cleverness. Not one. Light of touch, though weighty in feeling, it gives the impression of verbal austerity, or a willed moderation of thought. The passages of high literary merit, so uniformity sustained as to escape the notice of the reader, expose the natural and logical development of the story with a purposeful progression which is primarily satisfying to the intelligence, and ends by stirring the emotions. In the essentials of matter and treatment it is a book of today. Its critical spirit and its impartial method are meant for a humanity which has outgrown the stage of fairy tales, realistic, romantic or even epic.

For the fairy tale, be it not ungratefully said, his walked the earth in many unchallenged disguises, and lingers amongst us to this day wearing, sometimes, amazingly heavy clothes. It lingers; and even it lingers with some assurance. Mankind has come of age, but the successive generations still demand artlessly to be amazed, moved and amused. Certain forms of innocent fun will never grow old, I suppose. But the secret of the long life of the fairy tale consists mainly in this, I suspect: that it is amusing to the writer thereof.

Whatever public wants its supplies, it ministers first of all to his vanity in an intimate and delightful way. The pride of fanciful invention; the pride of that invention which soars (on goose's wings) into the empty blue is like the intoxication of an elixir sent by the gods above. And whether it is that the gods are unduly generous, or simply because the sight of human folly amuses their idle malice, that sort of felicity is easier attained pen is hand than the sober pride, always mingled with misgivings, of a single-minded observer and conscientious interpreter of reality. This is why the fairy tale, in its various disguises of optimism, pessimism, romanticism, naturalism and what not, will always be with us. And, indeed, that is very comprehensible, the seduction of irresponsible freedom is very great; and to be tied to the earth (even as the hewers of wood and drawers of water are tied to the earth) in the exercise of one's imagination, by every scruple of conscience and honour, may be considered a lot hard enough not to be lightly embraced. This is why novelists are comparatively rare. But we must not exaggerate. This world, even if one is tied fast to its earthy foundations by the subtle and tyrannical bonds of artistic conviction, is not such a bad place to write fiction in. At any rate, we can know of no other; an excellent reason for us to try to think as well as possible of the world we do know.

In the world, whose realities are discovered, interpreted, commented on, criticized and exposed on works of fiction, Mr. Galsworthy selects for the subject-matter of his book the Family, an institution which has been with us as long, I should think, as the oldest and the least venerable pattern of fairy tale. As Mr. Galsworthy, however, is no theorist but an observer, it is a definite kind of family that falls under his observation. It is the middle-class family; and even with more precision, as we are warned

in the sub-title, an upper middle-class family anywhere at large in space and time, but a family, if not exactly of today, then of only last evening, so to say. Thus at the outset we are far removed from the vagueness of the traditional "once upon a time in a far country there was a king," which somehow always manages to peep through the solemn disguises of fairy tales masquerading as novels with and without purpose. The Forsytes walk the pavement of London and own some of London's houses.

They wish to own more; they wish to own them all. And maybe they will. Time is on their side. The Forsytes never die — so Mr. Galsworthy tells us, while we watch them assembling in old Jolyson Forsyte's drawing room on the occasion of June Forsyte's engagement of Mr. Bosinney, incidentally an architect and an artist, but, by the only definition that matters, a man of no property whatever.

A family is not at first sight an alarming phenomenon. But Mr. Galsworthy looks at the Forsytes with the individual vision of a novelist seeking his inspiration amongst the realities of this earth. He points out to us this family's formidable character as unit of society, as a reproduction in miniature of society itself. It is made formidable, he says, by the cohesion of its members (between whom there need not exist either affection or even sympathy) upon a concrete point, the possession of property.

The solidity of the foundation laid by Mr. Galsworthy for his fine piece of imaginative work becomes at once apparent. For whichever came first, family or property, in the beginnings of social organization, or whether they came together and were indeed at first scarcely distinguishable from each other, it is clear that in the close alliance of these two institutions society has found the way of its development and nurses the hope of its security. In their sense of property the Forsytes establish the consciousness of their right and the promise of their duration. It is an instinct, a primitive instinct. The practical faculty of the Forsytes has erected it into a principle; their idealism has expanded it into a sort of religion which has shaped their notions of happiness and decency, their prejudices, their piety, such thoughts as they happen to have and the very course of their passions. Life as a whole has come to be perceptible to them exclusively in terms of property. Preservation, acquisition — acquisition, preservation. Their laws, their morality, their art and their science appear to them, justifiably enough, consecrated to that double and unique end. It is the formula of their virtue.

In this world o'f Forsytes (who never die) organized in view of acquiring and preserving property, Mr. Galsworthy (who is no inventor of didactic fairy tales) places with the sure instinct of a novelist a man and a woman who are no Forsytes, it is true, but whom he

presents as in no sense the declared adversaries of the great principle of property. They only happen to disregard it. And this is a crime. They are simply two people to whom life speaks imperatively in terms of love. And this is enough to establish their irreconcilable antagonism and to precipitate their unavoidable fate. Deprived naturally and suddenly of the support of laws and morality, of all human countenance, and even, in a manner of speaking, of the consolations of religion, they find themselves miserably crushed, both the woman and the man. And the principle of property is vindicated. The woman being the weaker, it is in her case vindicated with consummate cruelty. For a peculiar cowardice is one of the characteristics of this great and living principle. Strong in the worship of so many thousands and the possession of so many millions, it starts with affright at the slightest challenge, it trembles before mere indifference, it directs its heaviest blows at the disinherited who should appear weakest in its sight. Irene's fate is made unspeakably atrocious, no less — but nothing more. Mr. Galsworthy's instinct and observation serve him well here. In Soames Forsyte's town house, whose front door stands wide open for half an hour or so on a certain foggy night, there is no room for tragedy. It is one of the temples of property, of a sort of unholy religion who fundamental dogma, public ceremonies and awful secret rites, forming the subject matter of this remarkable novel, take no account of human dignity. Irene, as last seen crushed and alive within the hopeless portals, remains for us a poignantly pitiful figure and nothing more.

This then, roughly and summarily, is the book in its general suggestion. Going on to particulars which make up the intrinsic value of a work of art, it rests upon the subtle and interdependent relation of Mr. Galsworthy's intellect and feelings which from his temperament, and reveals Mr. Galsworthy's very considerable talent as a writer — a talent so considerable that it commands at once our respectful

attention. The foundation of this talent, it seems to me, lies in a remarkable power of ironic insight combined with an extremely keen and faithful eye for all the phenomena on the surface of the life he observes. These are the purveyors of his imagination, whose servant is style clear, direct, sane, illumined by a perfectly unaffected

sincerity. It is the style of a man whose sympathy with mankind is too genuine to allow him the smallest gratification of his vanity at the cost of his fellow creatures. In its moderation it is a style sufficiently pointed to carry deep his remorseless irony and grave enough to be the dignified vehicle of his profound compassion. Its sustained harmony is never interrupted by those bursts of cymbals and fifes which some deaf people acclaim for brilliance. Before all, it is a style well under control, and therefore it never betrays this tender and ironic writer into an odious cynicism of laughter or tears. For there are two kinds of cynicism, the cynicism of the hyena and the cynicism of the crocodile, which last, by the way, commands all sorts of respects from the inhabitants of these Isles. Mr. Galsworthy remains always a man, whether he is amused or moved.

I am afraid that my unavowed intention in writing about this book (of which I have talked so much and said so little) has been discovered by now. Therefore I confess. Confession — public, I mean — is good for one's conscience. Such is my intention. And it would be easier to carry out if I only knew exactly the motives which prompt people to read novels. But I do not know them all. Some of us, I understand, take up a novel to gratify a natural malevolence, the author being supposed to hold the mirror up to the odiously ridiculous nature of our next-door neighbour. From laboriously collected information I am, however, led to believe that most people read novels for amusement. This is as it should be. But, whatever be their motives, I entertain towards all novel-readers (for reasons which must remain concealed from the readers of this paper) the feelings of warm and respectful affection. I would not try to deceive them for worlds. Never! This being understood, I go on to declare, in the peace of my heart and the serenity of my conscience, that if they want amusement they will find it between the covers of this book. They will find plenty of it in this episode in the history of the Forsytes, where the reconciliation of a father and son, the dramatic and poignant comedy of Soames Forsyte's marital relations, and the tragedy of Bosinney's failure are exposed to our gaze with the remorseless yet sympathetic irony of Mr. Galsworthy's art, in the light of the unquenchable fire burning on the alter of property. They

will find amusement, and perhaps also something more lasting — if they care for it. I say this with all the reserves and qualifications which strict truth requires around every statement of opinion. Mr. Galsworthy may possibly be found disappointing by some, but he will never be found futile by any one, and never uninteresting by the most exacting. I myself, for instance, am not so sure of Bosinney's tragedy. But this hesitation of my mind, for which the author may not be wholly responsible after all, need only be mentioned and no more, in the face of his considerable achievement.

A Glance at Two Books

The national English novelist seldom regards his work — the exercise of his Art — as an achievement of active life by which he will produce certain definite effects life by which he will produce certain definite effects upon the emotions of his readers, but simply as an instinctive, often unreasoned, out pouring of his own emotions. He does not go about building up his book with a precise intention and a steady mind. It never occurs to him that a book is a dead, that the writing of it is an enterprise as much as the conquest of a colony. He has no such clear conception of his craft. Writing from a full heart, he liberates his soul for the satisfaction of his own sentiment; and when he has finished the scene he is at liberty to strike his forehead and exclaim: "This is genius!"

Thackeray is reported to have done this, and there is no reason why any novelist of his type should not. He is, as a matter of fact, writing lyrically (a lyric is the expression of a mood); he is expressing his own moods: I take what the gods give me — he says in all humility, and when the godhead inspires him with what seems goods to his heart, to his imagination, to his tenderness or to his indignation, he may say, and use the words literally, 'This is genius!"

It is. And it is probably the reason why the distinctively English novelist is always at his best in denunciations of institutions, of types or of conventionalized society.

It is comparatively easy for us, when we are really moved by the clearness of our vision, to convince an audience that Messrs. A., B. and C. are callous, ferocious or cowardly. We should have to use much more conscious art to give a permanent impression of those gentlemen as purely altruist.

Thus Mr. Osborne, the hard merchant, father of Captain Osborne, is more definite and flawless than many of Thackeray's so called good characters; and thus Mr. Pecksniff is, through scorn and dislike, rendered more memorable than the brothers Cheeryble. It is not perhaps so much that these distinguished writers were completely incapable of loving their fellow men simply as men, exposed to suffering, temptation and affliction, as that, neglecting

the one indispensable thing, neglecting to use their powers of selection and observation, they emotionally excelled in rendering the disagreeable. And that is easy. To find beauty, grace, charm in the bitterness of truth is a graver task.

Thackeray, we imagine, did not love his gentle heroines. He did not love them. He was in love with the sentiments they represented. He was, in fact, in love with what does not exist — and that is why Amelia Osborne does not exist, either in colour, in shape, in grace, in goodness. Turgeniev probably did not love his Lisa, a most pathetic, pure, charming and profound creation, for what she was, in her creator's mind. He loved her disinterestedly, as it were, out of pure warmth of heart, as a human being in the tumult and hazard of life. And that is why we must feel, suffer and live with that wonderful creation. That is why she is as real to us as her stupid mother, as the men of the story, as the sombre Varvard, and all the others that may be called the unpleasant characters in 'The House of Gentlefolk."

I have been reading two books in English which have attracted a good deal of intelligent attention, but neither seems to have been considered as attentively as they might have been from this point of view. The one, The Island Pharisees," by Mr. John Galsworthy, is a very good example of the national novel; the other, "Green Mansions," by Mr. W.H. Hudson, is a proof that love, the pure love of rendering the external aspects of things, can exists side by side with the national novel in English letters.

Mr. Galsworthy's hero in 'The Island Pharisees," during his pilgrimage right across the English social system, asks himself: "Why? Why is not the world better? Why are we all humburgs? Why is the social system so out of order?" And he gets no answer to his questions, for, indeed, in his mood no answer is possible, neither is an answer needed for the absolute value of the book. Shelton is dissatisfied

with his own people, who are good people, with artists, whose "at homes" he drops into, with marriage settlements and wedding services, with cosmopolitan vagabonds, with Oxford dons, with policemen — with himself and his love.

The exposition of all the characters in the book is done with

an almost unerring touch, with a touch indeed that recalls the sureness and the delicacy of Turgeniev's handling. They all live — and Mr. Galsworthy — or rather his hero, John Shelton, finds them all Pharisaic. It is as if he were championing against all these "good" people some intangible lost cause, some altruism, some higher truth that for ever seems to soar out of his grasp. It is not exactly that Shelton is made to uphold the bitter morality of the cosmopolitan vagabond; for Mr. Galsworthy is too good an artist and too good a philosopher to make his Louis Ferrand impossibly attractive or even possibly cynical.

Shelton upholds, not so much the fact as the ideal of honest revolt; he is the knight errant of a general idea. Therein he ceases to resemble the other heroes of English fiction who are the champions of particular ideas, tilting sometimes of windmills (for the human power of self-deception is great), but with a particular foe always in their eye. Shelton distinctly does not couch his lance against a windmill. He is a knight errant, disarmed and faithful, riding forlorn to an inevitable defeat; his adversary is a giant of a thousand heads and a thousand arms, a monster at once perfectly human and altogether soulless. Though nobody dies in the book, it is really the record of a long and tragic adventure, who tragedy is not so much in the event as in the very atmosphere, in the cold moral dusk in which the hero moves as if impelled by some fatal whisper, without a sword, corselet or helmet.

Amadis de Gaul would have struck a head off and counted it a doughty deed; Dickens would have flung himself upon pen and paper and made a caricature of the monster, would have flung at him an enormous joke vibrating with the stress of cheap emotions; Shelton, no legendary knight and being no humorist (but, like many simpler men, impelled by the destiny he carries within his breast), goes forth to be delivered, bound hand and foot, to the monster by his charming and limited Antonia. He is classed as an outsider by men in the best clubs, and his prospective mother-in-law tells him not to talk about things. He comes to grief socially, because in a world, which everyone is interested to go on calling the best of all possible worlds, he has insisted upon touching in challenge all the

shields hung before all the comfortable tents; the immaculate shield of his fiancee, of his mother-in-law, of the best men in the best clubs. He gets himself called and thought of as Unsound; and there in his social world the monster has made an end of him.

This is the end of the book; and with it there comes into the world of letters the beginning of Mr. Galsworthy as a novelist. For, paradoxically, a society that could not stand a Hamlet in the flesh at any price will read about him and welcome him on the stage to the end of its own incorrigible existence. This book, where each page lives with an interest of its own, has for its only serious artistic defect that of not being long enough, and for its greatest quality that of a sincere feeling of compassionate regard for mankind expressed nationally through a fine indignation. Of the promise of its method, of the accomplished felicity of its phrasing, I have left myself no room to speak.

The innermost heart of "Green Mansions," which are the forests of Mr. Hudson's book, is tender, is tranquil, is stepped in that pure love of the external beauty of things that seems to breathe upon us from the pages of Turgeniev's work. The charming quietness of the style soothes the hard irritation of our daily life in the presence of a fine and sincere, of a deep and pellucid personality. If the other book's gift is lyric, "Green Mansions" comes to us with the tone of the elegy. There are the voices of the birds, the shadows of the forest leaves, the Indians gliding through them armed with their blowpipes, the monkeys peering sadly from above, the very spiders! The birds search for insects; spiders hunt their prey.

"Now as I sat looking down on the leaves and the small dancing shadow, scarcely thinking of what I was looking at, I noticed a small spider with a flat body and short legs creep cautiously out on to the upper surface of a small leaf. Its pale red colour, barred with velvet black, first drew my attention to it; for it was beautiful to eye..."

"It was beautiful to the eye," so it drew the attention of Mr. Hudson's hero. In that phrase dwells the very souls of the book whose voice is soothing like a soft voice speaking steadily amongst the vivid changes of a dream. Only you must note that the spider had come to hunt its prey, having mistaken the small dancing shadow

for fly, because it is there in the fundamental difference of vision lies the difference between book and book. The other type of novelist might say: "It attracted my attention because it was savage and cruel and beautiful only to the eye. And I have written of it here so that it may be hated and laughed at for ever. For of course being greedy and rapacious it was stupid also, mistaking a shadow for substance, like certain evil men, we have heard of, that go about crying up the excellence of the world."

Preface

To "The Shorter Tales of Joseph Conrad"

The idea of publishing a volume of selected stories has not been received without a good deal of hesitation on my part. So much in fact as to drive me into the dangerous attempt to disclose the state of the feelings with which I approach this explanatory preface. My hesitation was, I may say, of a private character; private in the sense of being rooted deep in my personality, and not easily explainable even to such good fFiends as it has been my fortune to find in the American public. The deep, complex (and at times even contradictory) feelings which make up the very essence of an author's attitude to his own creation are real enough, yet they may be, often are, but shapes of cherished illusions. Frail plants, you will admit, and fit only for the shade of solitary thought. Precious — perhaps? Yes. But by their very nature precious to only one man, to him in whose mind — or is it the heart? — they are rooted.

That consideration would seem to me conclusive against any one writing any preface whatever, if it were not for my ineradicable suspicion that in this world, which some philosophers have defined merely as a series of "vain appearances," our very illusions must have a practical meaning. Are they not as characteristic of an individual as his opinions, for instance, or the features of his face? In fact, being less controllable they must be even more dangerously revelatory. This is an alarming consideration. But whether because of a strain of native impudence, acquired callousness, or inborn trust in the goodness of human nature, it has not prevented me during the last few years writing a good many revelatory prefaces, for which I have not been, so far, called to account. At any rate, nc incensed man with a shotgun has yet called here to invite me to desist. Thus encouraged, here I am again volunteering yet one more of these sincere confessions.

To begin with. I may venture to affirm that, however spontaneous the initial impulse, not one of the stories from which those included in this volume have been selected was achieved without much

conscious thought bearing not only on the problems of their style but upon their relation to life as I have known it, and on the nature of my reactions to the particular instances as well as to the general tenor of my personal experience. This gave to each of the successive tales, composed at various times and in varied mental conditions, a characteristic tone of its own. At least I thought so. Later, when I had to consider my past work in detail, in order to write the Author's Notes for my first collected edition, I was confirmed in my impression that each of my short story volumes had a consistent unity of outlook covering the mingled subjects of civilization and wilderness, of land life and life on the sea.

It would not be too much to say that this trait would be apparent to the least critical of readers, in, for instance, the 'Tales of Unrest." No story from that volume is included in this collection for a reason which will become apparent later to the patient reader of this Preface. It is the very collection of short stories I ever published, with a range of scene including the Malaya Archipelago, rustic Brittany, Central Africa, and the interior of an upper middle-class house in a residential street of London. It also seems to me perfectly clear on the face of it, that volume called "A Set of Six" — from which one story has been selected for this book — is very different from any other volume of short stories which I have published before or after. Yet, in Time, it covers almost the whole of the nineteenth century; and in Space it moves from South America through England and Russia to end in the south of Italy. A benevolent critic has remarked to me privately that it was the least atmospheric of all my works; and from my point of view I accepted this as a tribute to that inner consistency which I would claim for every set of my shorter tales. In the same way in the case of the volume "Within the Tides" I take the opinion expressed by one of the reviewers: "that the whole of the book seemed to produce the impression of being greater than

its component parts" as a confirmation of my sentiment of having welded the diversities of subject and treatment into a consistency characteristic, in its nature, of a certain period of my literary production.

The friendly reader will understand how, holding that belief on the subject of my shorter productions, I would recoil at first from

taking any of my stories out of their appointed places in the group to which they originally belonged. And this the more because their grouping belonged. And this the more because their grouping was never the result of a preconceived plan. It "just happened." And things that "just happen' in one's work seem impressive and valuable because they spring from profounder than the logic of a deliberate theory suggestive by acquiring learning, let us say, or by lessons drawn from analysed practice. And no one need quarrel for such a view with an artist for whom self-expression must, by definition, be the principal object, if not the only raison d'etre, of his existence. He will naturally take for his own, for better or worse, all the characteristics of his work; since all of them, intended or not intended, make up the individuality of his self-expression.

I suspect there are moments when what a man most values in his work — I mean even a man of action — is precisely the part the general mystery of things plays in its shaping: the discovery of those qualities that have "just happened" in that obscure region where honest success or honourable failure is unconsciously elaborated. But there are moments too when one's idealism (for idealism is practical and sane and the enemy of things that "just happen" and suchlike mysteries) prompts one to take up a different, more precise view of one's achievement — whatever it may be.

I must have been in one of those moments that the suggestion of a selected volume of my shorter stories came before me from my old friend and publisher, Mr. F.N. Doubleday, who is an idealist and who would simply hate to let anything "just happen" in his business. His business, to my mind, consists, mainly, in being the intermediary between certain men's reveries and the wide-awake brain of the rest of the world. Stated like this it seems a strangely fantastic occupation; yet his ways of carrying it on are always of a practical sort. I have learned to trust his conclusions implicitly on that ground. Also, for reasons of a deeper personal kind, having nothing to do with business, his words have great weight with me. But in order to reconcile my own idealism to the notion of taking the stories out of their natural surroundings, out of their native atmosphere as it were, some principle of selection had to be found. The only one that offered

itself with any chance of being acceptable was the principle of classification by subject; one that, whatever its disadvantages, has at least the advantage of being immune from the infection of illusions.

But I soon found that for a writer whose simple purpose had ever been the sincere rendering of his own deeper and more sympathetic emotions in the face of his belief in men and things — the philosopher's 'Vain appearances" which yet have endured, poignant or amusing, for so many ages, moving processionally towards the End of the World, which when it comes will be the vainest thing of all — the principle was not so easy in its application as it seemed to be at first sight. Though I have been often classed as a writer of the sea I have always felt that I had no specialty in that or any other specific subject. It is true that I have found a full text of life on the sea, long before I thought of writing a line or even felt the faintest stirring towards self-expression by means of the printed word. Sea life had been my life. It had been my own self-sufficient, self-satisfying possession. When the change came over the spirit of my dream (Calderon said that "Life is a Dream") my past had, by the very force of my work, become one of the sources of what I may call, for want of a better word, my inspiration — of the inner force which sets the pen in motion. I would add here "for better or worse," if those words did not sound horribly ungrateful after so many proofs of sympathy from the public for which this particular Preface is destined.

As a matter of fact I have written of the sea very little if the pages were counted. It has been the scene, but very seldom the aim, of my endeavour. It is too late after all those years to try to keep back the truth; so I will confess here that when I launched my first paper boats in the days of my literary childhood, I aimed at an element as restless, as dangerous, as changeable as the sea, and even more vast; — the unappeasable ocean of human life. I trust this grandiloquent image will be accepted with

an indulgent smile of the kind that is accorded to the lofty ambitions of well-meaning beginners. Much time has passed since, and I can assure my readers that I have never felt more humble than I do today while I sit tracing these words and that I see now, more clearly than ever before, that

indeed those were but paper boats, freighted with a grown-up child's dreams and launched innocently upon that terrible sea that, unlike the honest salt water of my early life, knows no hope of changing horizons but lies within the circle of an Eternal Shadow.

Approaching the problem of selection for this book in the full consciousness of my feelings, my concern was to give it some sort of unity, or in other words, its own character. Looking over the directive impulses of my writing life I discovered my guide in the one that had prompted me so often to deal with men whose existence was, so to speak, cast early upon the waters. Thus the characteristic trait of the stories included in this volume consists in the central figure of each being a seaman presented either in the relations of his professional life with his own kind, or in contact with landsmen and women, and embroiled in the affairs of that larger part of mankind which dwells on solid earth.

It would have been misleading to label those productions as sea tales. They deal with feelings of universal import, such, for instance, as the sustaining and inspiring sense of youth, or the support given by a stolid courage which confronts the unmeasurable force of an elemental fury simply as a thing that has got to be met and lived through with professional constancy. Of course, there is something more than mere ideas in those stories. I modestly hope that there are human beings in them, and also the articulate appeal of their humanity so strangely constructed from inertia and restlessness, from weakness and from strength and many other interesting contradictions which affect their conduct, and in a certain sense are meant to give a colouring to the actual events of the tale, and even to the response which is expected from the reader. To call them "studies of seamen" would have been pretentious and even misleading, in view of the obscurity of the individuals and the private character of the incidents. "Shorter Tales" is yet the best title I can think of for this collection. It commends itself to me by its noncommittal character, which will neither raise false hopes nor awaken blind antagonisms.

Why a volume aiming at unity should be wilfully divided into two parts is explained by my desire to give prominence to the stories

which begin them: "Youth," which is certainly a piece of autobiography ("emotions remembered in tranquillity"), and "Typhoon," which, defined from, a purely descriptive point of view, is the shorter of the two storm-pieces which I have written at different times.

From another point of view, the "guiding" point of view (that is of each story being concerned with a man who is also a seaman), the first Part deals with younger and the second with older men. I hardly ne§d say that in the arrangement of those two parts there has been no attempt at chronological order.

Therefore let neither friend nor enemy look for the development of the writer's literary faculty in this collection. As far as that is concerned, the book is a jumble. The unity of purpose lies elsewhere. In part First, "Youth" speaks for itself, both in its triumphant feeling and in its wistful regrets. The second story deals with what may be called the "espritde crops,* the deep fellowship of two young seamen meeting for the first time. Those two tales may be regarded as purely professional. Of the other two in Part First, one, it must be confessed, is written round a ship rather than round a seaman. The last, trying to render the effect of the fascination of a roving life, has the hard lot of a woman for its principal interest.

Part Two deals with men of a more mature age. There is no denying that in the typhoon which is being wrestled with by Captain Mc Whirr, it is typhoon the takes on almost a symbolic figure. The nest story is the story of a married seaman, badly married I admit, whose humanity to a pathetic waif spoils his life for him. The third is the story of a swindle, to be frank, planned on shore, but the sympathetic person is a seaman all right. The last may be looked upon as a story of a seaman's love for a very silent girl; but what I tried partly to suggest there was the existence of certain straightforward characters combining a natural ruthlessness with an unexpected depth of moral delicacy. Falk obeys the law of self-preservation pitilessly; but at the crucial moment of his bizarre love story he will not condescend to dodge the truth — the horrid truth! Finaiiy, let me say that with the exception of "Youth" none of

these stories is a record of experience in the absolute sense of the word. As I have said before in another preface, they are all authentic

because they are the product of twenty years of life — my own life. Deliberate invention had little to do with their existence — if they do exist. In each there lurks more than one intention. The facts gleaned from hearsay or experience in the various parts of the globe were but opportunities offered to the writer. What he has done with them is matter for a verdict which must be left to the individual consciences of the readers.

Cookery

A Preface to "A Handbook fo Cookery for a Small House," By Jessie Conrad

Of all the books produced since the most remote ages by human talents and industry those only that treat of cooking are, from a moral point of view, above suspicion. The intention of every other piece of prose may be discussed and even mistrusted; but the purpose of a cookery book is one and unmistakable. Its object can conceivably be no other than to increase the happiness of mankind.

This general consideration, and also a feeling of affectionate interest with which I am accustomed to view all the actions of the writer, prompt me to set down these few words of introduction for her book. Without making myself responsible for her teaching (I own that I find it impossible to read through a cookery book), I come forward modesty but gratefully as a Living Example of her practice. That practice I dare pronounce most successful. It has been for many priceless years adding to the sum of my daily happiness.

Good cooking is a moral agent. By good cooking I mean the conscientious preparation of the simple food of everyday life, not the more or less skilful concoction of idle feasts and rare dishes. Conscientious cookery is an enemy to gluttony. The trained delicacy of the palate, like a cultivated delicacy of sentiment, stands in the way of unseemly excesses. The decency of our life is for a great part a matter of good taste, of the correct appreciation of what is fine in simplicity. The intimate influence of conscientious cooking by rendering easy the processes of digestion promotes the serenity of mind, the graciousness of thought, and that indulgent view of our neighbours' failings which is the only genuine form of optimism. Those are its titles to our reverence.

A great authority upon North American Indians accounted for the sombre and excessive ferocity characteristic of these

savages by the theory that as a race they suffered from perpetual indigestion. The noble Red Man was a mighty hunter but his wives had not mastered the art of conscientious cookery. And the consequences were deplorable. The Seven Nations around the Great Lakes and the Horse-tribes of the Plains were but one vast prey to raging dyspepsia. The Noble Red Men were great warriors, great orators, great masters of outdoor pursuits; but the domestic life of their wigwams was coloured by the morose irritability which follows the consumptions of ill-cooked food. The gluttony of their indigestible feasts was a direct incentive to counsels of unreasonable violence. Victims of gloomy imaginings, they lived in abject submission to the wiles of a multitude of fraudulent medicine men — quacks — who haunted their existence with vain promises and false nostrums from the cradle to the grave.

It is to be remarked that the quack of modern civilization, the vendor of patent medicine, preys mainly upon the races of Anglo-Saxon stock who are also great warriors, great orators, mighty hunters, great masters of outdoor pursuits. No virtues will a avail for happiness if the righteous art of cooking be neglected by the national conscience. We owe much to the fruitful meditations of our sages, but a sane view of life is, after all, elaborated mainly in the kitchen — the kitchen of the small house, the abode of the preponderant majority of the people. And a sane view of life excludes the belief in patent medicine. The conscientious cook is the natural enemy of the quack without a conscience; and thus his labours make for the honesty, and favour the amenity, of our existence. For a sane view of life can be no other than kindly and joyous, but a believer in patent medicine is steeped in the gloom of vague fears, the sombre attendants of disordered digestion.

Strong in this conviction, I introduce is little book to the inhabitants of the little houses who are the arbiters of the nation's destiny. Ignorant of the value of its methods, I have no doubt whatever as to its

intension. It is highly moral. There cannot be the slightest question as to that; for is it not a cookery book?

— the only product of the human mind altogether above suspicion.

In that respect no more need, or indeed can, be said. As regards the practical, intention, I gather that no more than the clear and concise exposition of elementary principles has been the author's aim. And this too is laudable, because modesty is a becoming virtue in an artist. It remains for me only to express the hope that by correctness of practice and soundness of precept this little book will be able to add to the cheerfulness of nations.

The Future of Constantinople

To the Editor of The Times, November 7, 1912.

Sir,

How long the last, Asiatic, phase of the history of the Turks — Sultanate of Damascus or Caliphate of Baghdad — may last, no one can say. That its European chapter is closed few only can doubt. But nobody will deny that a fierce scramble for Constantinople amongst the victors would be a most unseemly and disturbing complication.

The Serbs and Bulgars have no definite historical claim to advance. Greece has that, of course, But it must go very far back, to Byzantium — the old obscure colony. And really I cannot imagine this most democratic of kingdoms desiring a capital other than Athens — the very cradle of democracy, matchless in the wonders of its life and vicissitudes of its history.

The Constantinople of which I think is not the Greek colony. It is the Imperial and symbolic city, one of the refuges of European civilization and the fit object of Europe's care. It should rest at last under the joint guarantee of all the Powers, after its infinitely varied, stormy, and tragic existence of august dominion, desperate wars, and abject slavery. It should find a dignified peace as an independent city, with a small territory, governed by an elected Senate (in which all the races of its population would be represented) and by — I won't call him its Burgomaster — let us say its Patrician, as the executive head. The Balkan Powers might be co-jointly entrusted with his nomination. This would, to a certain extent, secure the share of Slavonic influence, since in the Senate the Greeks, I imagine, would predominate.

The independent Constantinople of my vision would be the splendid spiritual capital of the Balkan Peninsula naturally; its intellectual capital almost certainly. Commercially, too, as a free port, it would have all the chances, though Salonika may turn out a serious competitor. The various capitals of the Balkan States, residences of Courts ana centres of political life, need not be jealous

of the unique city which has done so much for the organization of mankind.

From its geographical position the Powers could easily give effective protection to that small municipal state. This plan, of course, implies free Dardanelles (but that seems already certain) and neutralized Bosphorus.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant

J.Conrad.

November, 1912.

Perhaps you will allow me to expand a little the idea thrown out in my letter to The Times. Of its reception at large I know nothing — and perhaps is does not merit any sort of reception. Of course, when one puts down anything in the shape of a proposal one does think over the objections. I am not inclined to believe a notion right and feasible simply because it has occurred to me. I am not of that happy temperament. Still, when the first man who read my letter turned upon me with the words, "So you too, I see, have joined the ideologues," I believe my check blanched.

This was a pretty heavy charge to bring against a man conscious of being guilty of no worse crime than a little imagination. But it was not the severity of the indictment nor yet the knowledge that "ideologue" was the term of utmost scorn in the mouth of Napolean I which disturbed me. I was not frightened or angry. I was extremely surprised. Ideologue! And I had meant my suggestion to be eminently practical. Practical — that is, strictly in accordance with the fitness of things.

For to any one with a little historical sense of it is not in the fitness of things that Constantinople should become the capital of a Bulgarian kingdom. I do not wish to hurt youthful susceptibilities but

frankly the city of the Bosphorus is too great, too illustrious for that fate. The crash of its fall reechoed ominously from one end of Christendom to the other. Its liberation will send a mournful whisper of angry dismay through the Mussulman world. And the event at which we look is historically too momentous for anything but the

indestructible city itself, the jewel of the Balkans and once the only luminous spot through nearly five centuries of European night, to be its commemorative monument.

If this be mere ideology then I am safe to say it has its inciting cause in a perfectly clear view of possible eventualities. Let us piously hope that the dawn of peace for the Peninsula will succeeded this lurid conflagration. The waned Crescent is setting for ever; but to a calm observer the dawn seems a long way yet below the horizon. There will be many questions to be settled between themselves by the Balkan Children of the Cross — not to speak of some other outside Christians with views of their own. And what if amongst other things we were to see before many years a war between Greece and Bulgaria for the possession of Constantinople?

For in fact, historically and racially, Greece alone has a claim to Constantinople. But who is going to hand it over to her now? The Bulgarians are nearer, and, we are given to understand, intoxicated with their success.

But in this success they are not alone; and you cannot cut the crown of victory into four pieces and present each combatant with one fourth of immortal glory. The only sane way is to leave the Imperial City outside the field of dispute by guaranteed agreement. There will be spoil enough — whether cut and dried already or likely to turn out an awkward morsel to carve — to repay the blood and treasure. For as to risks taken, there were none to be proud of in this enterprise.

As to the difficulty of staying the conquering army, that is only the lofty verbiage of elation. A disciplined army can always be stayed. The Russian army was stayed at San Stefano, and its victory, if not so swift and more dearly bought, was quite as complete. And indeed I would not deny to any of the combatants the satisfaction of triumphal entry. It is what comes after that will count.

Let us be sincere in this matter. This game was played for unequal stakes. For Turkey was staking her very head, while the Allies risked no more than a more or less severe blood-letting. We know that if the fortune of war had gone the other way, unanimous

Europe would have stopped it with the status quo declaration and the hand of Turkey would have been stayed. This fact, of which not a single Balkanian of them all ever had the slightest doubt, should make them amenable to reason in the final settlement.

Nobody wishes to rob them of what is won. Constantinople would remain a joint possession, but with a life and dignity of its own, till — till another Eastern Empire comes into being. And I think it would be a rational arrangement. The same objector, while I was trying to parry the charge of being an ideologue, lunged at me with the affirmation that this was "working for Russia." I confess that I don't understand that thrust. I think that for some time the possession of Contantinople has ceased to be one of the immediate aims of Russian policy. But even so, I don't see how I am serving any such dark purpose. It would be certainly easier to make war on Bulgaria and take Constantinople from it than to lay violent hands on a defenceless free town under a European guarantee, to which Russia herself would be a party. Not to mention the fact that such an aggression would be considered a casus bellinoX only by one but by all the Balkan powers (including Greece), the joint guardians of the city under Europe's sanction.

But as far as Russia's desire of an open Black Sea is concerned, the plan should certainly meet with her approval. I don't think that Russia would like to see numerous batteries of Bulgarian guns on the heights behind the town, sealing up the Bosphorus most effectually even without the help of the Turks on the other side. Indeed, I don't believe Russia would contemplate such a possibility for a moment. And how would Bulgaria (or Greece for that matter) like the obligation of an unarmed capital and the limitations of her sovereign rights in the matter of defence?

A neutralized Bosphorus and a free Constantinople would arouse no envy, no jealousies, and give no offence. Constantinople, a religious and intellectual capital — a common possession, giving no umbrage

to any one — a holy city of infinite prestige and incomparable beauty. And I am even thinking here of the Mohammedans. There will be, no doubt, many Muslims left in the peninsula, industrious and peaceable citizens of the Christian states.

To them also Constantinople shall be a holy city; for the religious head of Mohammedans in Europe would be residing there, nominated by the Caliph in Asia, subject to confirmation by the Balkan powers.

It seems to me too that such a solution of the Constantinople problem would soothe to a certain extent the grief and unrest of Mussulmans all the world over. A consideration worth the notice of the European States which have become by conquest masters of Mohammedan territories.

The details of organization, in which all the races of the peninsula would be justly represented, cannot be a matter of insuperable difficulty. Every Bulgarian, Greek, Serb, or Montenegrin entering Constantinople should be able to say: "I am at home here. This ground on which I stand has been liberated by me and my brothers and this Imperial City, free to us all and subject to no one, is the splendid monument of our victory."

The Congo Diary

Introduction

The diary kept by Joseph Conrad in the Congo in 1890, or such of it as has survived (for there is no saying whether there was more or not), is contained in two small black penny notebooks, and is written in pencil. One carries his initials, J.C.K. — Joseph Conrad Korzeniowski. The first entry is dated June 13, 1890, but in the second notebook dates are practically discarded, and it is impossible to say when the last entry was made. And names of places, also, are practically discarded in the second notebook, while abounding in the first, so that, though we can see that the diary was begun at Matadi, we cannot discover where it was ended. The last place mentioned is Lulanga, far up the great sweep of the Congo River to the north of the Equator, but there remain some twenty-four pages of the diary beyond that entry in which no name whatsoever appears. It must, indeed, have been continued into the very heart of that immense darkness where the crisis of his story, "Heart of Darkness," is unfolded. We know from "A Personal Record" that he reached ultimately somewhere to the neighboured of Stanley Falls; and Stanley Falls are farther from Lulanga than Lulanga is from Stanley Pool.

And it is in this same book that we can read how the Polish boy, when nine years of age, looking upon a map of Africa, had put his finger upon its unexplored centre, and had said to himself, "When I grow up I shall go there," Go there he did, and these notebooks are the first expression of his fulfilled resolve.

The map will enable the reader to plot out, with reasonable accuracy, the exact route followed by Conrad on his overland journey, from, Matadi, which is about one hundred miles above the mouth of the Congo, to Nselemba, on or near the southest corner of Stanley Pool — a distance of probably more than two hundred and fifty miles from Matadi — where it was that he joined the Roides Beiges, as second in command, for the up-river voyage. The places and streams alluded to on this overland journey have been given on the

map in Conrad's own spelling, even where their names have been altered (unless beyond recognition, which may have happened in certain instances) in existing atlases, many of which have been examined, or can only be placed approximately, owing to their not being mentioned at all. The mapping of the Congo is not in a very advanced state, and, what with the paucity of the entries and the contradictory, nature of the information, precise accuracy is not attainable. All the same, it is easy enough to trace the general line of his march, which lay much nearer the banks of the Congo than lies the railway which now runs between Matadi and Kinshasa of Stanley Pool.

The following is a reproduction of the first notebook alone — not, however, of the list of names, persons, books, stores, and the calculations that fill the last pages — consisting of thirty-two manuscript pages, not all of which are full, and twelve of which are further curtailed by Conrad's sectional drawings of the day's march. The given spelling and abbreviations have been adhered to throughout — they help to heighten its true flavour — but the paragraphing and the punctuation have been freely altered.

I may mention that these two notebooks are now preserved in the library of Harvard University, and that when I was in America in 1925 I saw them again in their new and permanent home and checked the text once more.

As to the appended footnotes, their chief purpose has been to show how closely some of the earlier pages of "Heart of Darkness" are a recollection of Conrad's own Congo journey. This story was serialized in Blackwood's Magazine between February and April, 1899, and I remember Conrad telling me that its 40,000 words occupied only about a month in writing. When we consider the painful, slow labour with which he usually composed, we can perceive how intensely vivid his memories of this experience must have been, and, to judge from the parallel passages, how intensely actual. But then the notebook

only goes to prove the almost self-evident contention that much of Conrad's work is founded upon autobiographical remembrance. Conrad himself wrote of this story in his Author's Note to the new edition of the "Youth" volume in which it appeared: "'Heart of Darkness' is quite as authentic in fundamentals as 'Youth' ...it is experience pushed a little (and only a little) beyond the actual facts of the case." If only he had kept a diary of his meeting and association with Kurtz!

The pages of The Concord Edition of "Youth" — the edition always referred to in the notes — which bear direct reference to the first volume of the diary, are only three, 70-72, but in these few pages there are an astonishing number of touches strongly reminiscent of the diary. One would argue, indeed, that he must have consulted the diary when writing the story, but Mrs. Conrad assures me that it was not so. Twice had she saved it from the wastepaper basket, and probably by the time "Heart of Darkness" came to be written Conrad had forgotten all about it, or did not dream that it had survived. He never spoke to me of it, and I never heard of its existence until after his death.

The second notebook, which is an entirely technical account of Congo navigation, written, no doubt, in relation to the then river charts, is not printed here, simply because it has no personal or literary interest. It is much longer than the first notebook, and is contained on seventy-nine pages, apart from several pages of rough outline maps. I reproduce a portion of one page, in order to show a sample:

"11. N. (A) Long reach to a curved point. Great quantity of dangerous snags along the stard shore. Follow the slight bend of the shore with caution. The Middle of the Channel is a S — B — [sand bank] always covered. The more northerly of the two islands has its lower end bare of trees covered with grass and light green low bushes, then a low flat, and the upper end is timbered with light trees of a darker green tint."

It will be seen from this passage, which, though typical, is less technical than most, that the second notebook is not really, like the first, so much in the nature of a diary as of a specific aid to navigation. But those who recall the river journey in "Heart of Darkness," with its dangers and its difficulties, will perceive how this notebook, too, has played its special and impersonal part in the construction of the story.

The title-page of the first note book is almost all torn out, but the title-page of the second reads, "Up-river Book, commenced 3 August 1890, S.S. Roi des Beiges." Long ago, when I was making, from Conrad's dictation, a list of the ship he sailed in, he wrote opposite Roi des Beiges — "Heart of Darkness,' 'Out-post."' And in truth, hints for" Heart of Darkness," reminders of Heart of Darkness," lie thick upon the pages of the first note book, though "An Outpost of Progress" — " the lightest pat of the loot I carried off from Central Africa," to quote his Author's Note to "Tales of Unrest," in which it was published — is only visible in the diary by the implication of the tropical African atmosphere.

No other diary of Conrad's is extant, and I am very sceptical as to whether he ever kept another. He was not at all that type of man, and his piercing memory for essentials was quite sufficient for him to recreate powerfully vanished scenes and figures for the purposes of his work. In 1890, of course, he had published nothing, and though we know that the unfinished MS. (seven chapters) of "Almayer's Folly" accompanied him on his Congo journey — "A Personal Record" describes how it was nearly lost on the river — yet it is doubtful whether he seriously envisaged its appearance in print at a future date. It was largely the breakdown of Conrad's health, due to this very trip, that caused him finally to abandon the sea, and if he had not abandoned the sea, how could he have become a novelist in the accepted sense? Unless we assume that genius must always find means of full expression — a big assumption and quite beyond proof — we owe it really to an accident that Conrad adopted writing as a career. Without this journey, and, therefore, without this diary, where would have been the great Conrad novels?

Thirty-four years to a day from beginning the second noteboook, Conrad died — August 3, 1924. Reading it again, I find, as I am continually finding, how many things there are which I would have liked to ask him and never did ask him, and how much I want to know, which I never now can know. Well, that is always what happens when our friends depart. This diary is only a strange, tantalizing fragment and must eternally remain so. Yet it has a value of its own, both real and romantic, and I am glad to be able to give it to the world.

Richard Curle.

The Diary

Arrived at Matadi1 on the 13th of June, 1890.

Mr. Gosse, chief of the station (O.K.) retaining us for some reason of his own.

Made the acquaintance of Mr. Roger Casement,2 which I should consider as a great pleasure under any circumstances and now it becomes a positive piece of luck. Thinks, speaks well, most intelligent and very sympathetic..

Feel considerably in doubt about the future. Think just now that my life amongst the people (white) around here cannot be very comfortable. Intend avoid acquaintances as much as possible.

Through Mr. R.C. have made the acquain80 of Mr. Underwood, the Manager of the English Factory (Hatton & Cookson) in Kalla Kalla. Avfle com" — - hearty and kind. Lunched there on the 21st.

24th. Gosse and R.C. gone with a large lot of ivory down to Boma. On G.['s] return intend to start up the river. Have been myself busy packing ivory in casks. Idiotic employment. Health good up to now.

1On his voyage from Europe presumably.

•"Afterwards the notorious Sir Roger Casement, who was hanged for treason on August 3,1916 — the very date of which Conrad died eight years later. At this Casement was in the economy of a commercial firm in the Congo. In 1898 he became British Counsul in the Congo Free State.

Wrote to Simpson, to Gov. B., to Purd.,1 to Hope,2 to Capt. Froud,3 and to Mar.4 Prominent characteristic of the social life here; people speaking ill of each other.5

Saturday, 28th June. Left Matadi with Mr. Harou6 and a caravan of 31 men.7 Parted with Casement in a very friendly manner. Mr. Gosse saw us off as far as the State station. First halt, M'poso. 2 Danes in Company.8 Sundfay], 29th. Ascent of Pataballa sufficiently fatiguing. Camped at 11 a.m. at Nsoke river. Mosquitos [always spelt thus].

Monday, 30th. To Congo da Lemba after passing black rocks. Long ascent. Harou giving up.9 Bother, Camp bad. Water far. Dirty. At night Harou better.

Tuesday 1st July. Left early in a heavy mist, marching towards Lufu river. Part route through forest on the sharp slope

'Probably Captain Purely, an acquaintance of Conrad.

2Conrad's old friend, now living in Esser, Mr. G.F.W. Hope. In 1900 Conrad dedicated "Lord Jim" to Mr. and Mrs. Hope," with grateful affection after many years of friendship."

^he then Secretary of the London Ship-Master's Society. See "A Personal Record" (Concord Edition), p.7. "Dear Captain Froud — it is impossible not to pay him the tribute of affectionate familiarity at this distance of years — had very sound views as to the advancement of knowledge and status for the whole body of the officers of the mercantile marine."

4Probably Marguerite Poradowska, his aunt.

sThis was also a failing of the white men at the "Central Station" in "Heart of Darkness."

"Harou was an official of the Etat Independant du Congo Beige.

'Compare "Heart of Darkness," p.70: "Next day I left that station at last with a caravan of 60 men for a 200-mile tramp." On 13 out of the 19 travelling days taken by Conrad on this overland journey he kept a record of the distance covered, and it totals 197^ miles.

'Curiously enough, the identity of these two Danes was discovered by Monsieur G. Jean-Aubry in Brussels early in 1925. Not knowing that they were mentioned in the diary, he ommitted to take names of particulars.

"He seems to have been constantly unwell and one may compare "Heart of Darkness," p.71: "I had a white companion too, not a bad chap, but rather too fleshly, and with the exasperating habit of fainting on the hot hillsides, miles away from the least bit of shade or water."

of a high mountain. Very long descent. Then market place from where short walk to the bridge (good) and camp. V.G. Bath. Clear river. Feel well. Harou all right. 1st chicken, 2 p. [m.] No sunshine to-day.

Wednesday, 2nd July. Started at 5:30 after a sleepless night. Country more open. Gently undulating hills. Road good, in perfect order. (District of Lukungu.) Great market at 9.30. Bought eggs and chickens. Feel not well to-day. Heavy cold in the head. Arrived at 11 at Banza Manteka. Camped on the market place. Not well enough to call on the missionary. Water scarce and bad. Camp9 place dirty. 2 Danes still in Company.

Thursday, 3rd July. Left at 6 a.m. after a good night's rest. Crossed a low range of hills and entered a broad, valley, or rather plain, with a break in the middle. Met an offer of the State inspecting. A few minutes afterwards saw at a camp3 place the dead body of a Backongo. Shot?1 Horrid smell.

Crossed a range of mountains, running N.W. — S.E. by a low pass. Another broad flat valley with a deep ravine through the centre. Clay and gravel. Another range parallel to the first mentioned, with a chain of low foothills running close to it. Between the two came to camp on the banks of the Luinzono river. Camp9 place clean. River clear. Gov1 Zanzibari2 with register. Canoe. 2 Danes camp3 on the other bank. Health good.

General tone of landscape gray-yellowish (dry grass) with reddish patches (soil) and clumps of dark green vegetation scattered sparsely about. Mostly in steep gorges between the high mountains or in ravines cutting the plain.3

'Compare "Heart of Darkness," p.71: "Once a white man in an unbuttoned uniform camping on the path ... was looking after the upkeep of the road, he declared. Can't say I saw any road or any upkeep, unless the body of a middle-aged negro with a bullet-hole in the forehead, upon which I absolutely stumbled three miles further on, may be considered as a permanent improvement."

2Compare "Heart of Darkness," p.71, in which he mentioned his meeting with a white man, who was accompanied by "an armed escort of lank Zanzibaris."

3ln "Heart of Darkness," p.70, the country of the march is described as "a stamped-in network of paths spreading over the empty land, through long grass, through burnt grass, thickets, down and up hilly ravines, up and down stony hills ablaze with heat."

Noticed Palma Christi — Oil Palm. Very straight, tall and thick trees in some places. Name not known to me. Villages quite invisible. Infer their existence from calbashes [s/cj suspended to palm trees for the "Malafu." Good many caravans and travellers. No women, unless on the market place.

Bird notes charming. One especially a flute-like note. Another, kind of "boom" resembling [s/c] the very distant baying of a bound. Saw only pigeons and a few green parroquets. Very small and not many. No birds of prey seen by me.1

Up to 9 a.m. sky clouded and calm. Afterwards gentle breeze from the Nn generally and sky clearing. Nights damp and cool. White mists on the hills up about half way. Water effects very beautiful this morning. Mists generally raising before sky clears.

Distance 15 miles. General direction N.N.E. — S.S.W. Friday, 4th July Left camp at 6.a.m. after a very unpleasant night. Marching across a chain of hills and then in a maze of hills. At 8:15 opened out into an undulating plain. Took bearings of a break in the chain of mountains on the other side. Bearing N.N.E. Road passes through that. Sharp ascents up very steep hills not very high. The higher mountains recede sharply and show a low hilly country. At 9:30 market place. At 10 passed R. Lukanga and at 10:30 camped on the Mpwe R.

To-day's march. Direction N.N. E.1/2 — N. Dist®° 13 miles. Saw another dead body lying by the path in an attitude of meditative repose.2

In the evening three women, of whom one albino, passed our camp; horrid chalky white with pink blotches; red eyes; red hair; features very negroid and ugly. Mosquitos. At night when the moon rose heard shouts and drumming in distant villages.3 Passed a bad night.

'These natural history observations are curious, as Conrad practically never should the slightest interest in such subjects.

'The most "Conradesque" phrase in the diary.

3Compare "Heart of Darkness," p.71: "Perhaps so some quiet night the tremor of far-off drums, sinking, swelling, a tremor vast, faint; a sound weird, appealing, suggestive, and wild — and perhaps with as profound a meaning as the sound of bells in a Christian country."

Saturday, 5th July. Left at 6:15. Morning cool, even cold, and very damp. Sky densely overcast. Gentle breeze from N.E. Road through a narrow plain up to R. Kwilu. Swift flowing and deep, 50 yds. wide. Passed in canoes. After* up and down very steep hills interested by deep ravines. Mains chain of heights running mostly N.W. — S.E. or W. and E. at times. Stopped at Manyamba Camp3 place bad — in a hollow — water very indifferent. Tent set at 10:15. N.N.E. Dist00 12 m.

Today fell into a muddy puddle — beastly! The fault of the man that carried me. After camp® went to small stream, bathed and washed clothes. Getting jolly well sick of this fun.

Tomorrow expect a long march to get to Nsona, 2 days from Manyanga. No sunshine to-day.

Sunday 6th July. Started at 5:40. The route at first hilly, then, after a sharp descent, traversing a broad plain. At the end of it a large market place. At 10 sun came out. After leaving the market passed another plain, then, walking on the crest of a chain of hills, passed 2 villages and at 11 arrived at Nsona. Village invisible.

Direction about N.N.E. Distance 18 miles.

In this camp (Nsona) there is a good camp9 place. Shady, water far and not very good. This night no mosquitos owing to large fires, all round our tent. Afternoon very close; night clear and starry.

Monday 7th July. Left at 6, after a good night's rest, on the road to Inkandu, which is some distance past Lukunga Govt, station. Route very accidented.1 Succession of round steep hills. At times walking along the crest of a chain of hills. Just before Lukunga our carriers took a wide sweep to the southward till the station bore N*. Walking through long grass for Vh hours. Crossed a broad river about 100 feet wide and 4 deep.

After another V2 hour's walk through manioc plantations in good order rejoined our route to the Ed of the Lukunga sta00, walking along an undulating plain towards the Inkandu market on a hill. Hot, thirsty and tired. At 11 arrived on the m1"1 place. About 200 people. Business

'An odd Gallicism. Conrad knew French long before he knew English; moreover, he was naturally talking much French at this time.

brisk. No water; no campfl place. After remaining for one hour left in search of a resting place. Row with carriers. No water. At last about 1 vfe p.m. camped on an exposed hill side near a muddy creek. No shade. Tent on a slope. Sun heavy. Wretched.

Direction N.E. by N. — Distance 22 miles.

Night miserably cold. No sleep. Mosquitos.

Tuesday, 8th July. Left at 6 a.m. About ten minutes from camp left main Gov1 path for the Manyanga track. Sky overcast. Rode up and down all the time, passing a couple of villages. The country presents a confused wilderness of hills, landships on their sides showing red. Fine effect of red hill covered in places by dark green vegetation. hour before beginning the descent got a glimpse of the Congo. Sky clouded.

To-day's march — 3 h. General direction N. by E. DisP 9M> miles.

Arrived at Manyanga at 9 a.m. Received most kindly by Messrs. Heyn and Jaeger. Most comfortable and pleasant halt.

Stayed here till the 25. Both have been sick. Most kindly care taken of us. Leave with sincere regrets.

Friday the 25th July, 1890. Left Manyanga at 21/a p.m. with plenty of hammock carriers. H. lame and not in very good form. Myself ditto but not lame. Walked as far as Mafiela and camped — 2 h.

Saturday 26th. Left very early. Road ascending all the time. Passed villages. Country seems thickly inhabited. At 11 arrived at large market place. Left at noon and camped at l.p.m.

General direction E Yz N-W1/2 S. Sun visible at 8 a.m. Very hot. Distance 18 miles.

Sunday, 27th. Left at 8.a.m. Sent luggage carriers straight on to Luasi, and went ourselves round by the Mission of Sutili. Hospitable reception by Mrs. Comber. All the missio, absent. The looks of the whole establishment eminently civilized and very refreshing to see after the lots of tumbled down hovels

in which the State & Company agents are content to live. Fine buildings. Position on a hill. Rather breezy.

Left at 3.p.m. At the first heavy ascent met Mr. Davis, Miss.,

returning from a preaching trip. Rev. Bentiey away in the south with his wife. This being off the road, no section given.1

Distance traversed about 15 miles. Gen. direction E. N. E.

At Luasi we get on again on to the gov1 road.

Camped at 41A p. m. With Mr. Heche in company. To-day no sunshine. Wind remarkably cold. Gloomy day.

Monday, 28th. Left camp at 6:30 after breakfasting with Heche. Road at first hilly. Then walking along the ridges of hill chains with valleys on both sides. The country more open and there is much more trees2 growing in large clumps in the ravines.

Passed Nzungi and camped, 11, on the right bank of the Ngoma, a rapid little river with rocky bed. Village on a hill to the right.

General direction E. N. E. — Distance 14 miles.

No sunshine. Gloomy cold day. Squalls.

Tuesday 29th Left camp at 7, after a good night's rest. Continuous ascent; rather easy at first. Crossed wooded ravines and the river Lunzadi by a very decent bridge. At 9 met Mr. Louette escorting a sick agent of the compy back to Matadi. Looking very well. Bad news from up the river. All the steamers disabled - one wrecked.3 Country wooded. At 10:30 camped at Inkissi.

General direction E. N. E. — Dist^lS miles.

Sun visible at 6:30. Very warm day.

Inkissi River very rapid; is about 100 yards broad. Passage in canoes. Banks wooded very densely, and valley of the river rather deep, but very narrow.

To-day did not set the tent, but put up in Gov: shimbek.

'Sections of the day's marches, with numerous names on them, were given under the following dates: July 3rd. 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th. 25th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, August 1st.

'One of the few un-English phrases in the diary. By 1890 Conrad had been a British subject for six years, but he never learnt the language until he was grown up.

^Compare "Heart of Darkness," p.72: "One of them [the white men at the Central Station] . .informed me with great volubility and many digressions ... that my steamer was at the bottom of the river."

Zanzibar!1 in charge — very obliging. Met ripe pineapple for the first time. On the road to-day passed a skeleton tied up to a post. Also white man's grave — no name — heap of stones in the form of a cross. Health good now.

Wednesday, 30th. Left at 6 a.m. intending to camp at Kinfumu. Two hours sharp walk brought me to Nsona na Nsefe. Market. V2 hour after Harou arrived very ill with billious [s/c\ attack and fever. Laid him down in Gov'- shimbek.

Does of ipeca. Vomiting bile in enormous quantities. At 11 gave him 1 gramme of quinine and lots of hot tea. Hot fit ending in heavy perspiration. At 2 p.m. put him in hammock and started for Kinfumu. Row. with carriers all the way.2 Harou suffering much through the jerks of the hammock. Camped at a small stream. At 4 harou better; fever gone.

General direction N.E. by E. V2 E. Distance 13 miles.

Up till noon sky clouded and strong N.W. wind very chilling. From 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. sky clear and a very hot day. Expect lots of bother with carriers tomorrow. Had them all called and made a speech, which they did not understand.3 They promise good behaviour.

Thursday, 31st. Left at 6. Sent harou ahead, and followed in V2 an hour.4

Road presents several sharp ascents, and a few others easier but rather long. Notice in places sandy surface soil instead of hard clay as heretofore; think however that the layer of sand is not very thick and that the clay would be found under it. Great difficulty in carrying Harou. Too heavy — bother.5 Made two

See note, p.163.

“Compare “Heart of Darkness,” p.71: “Then he [the white man with him] got fever, and had to be carried in a hammock slung under a pole. As he weighed sixteen stone I had no end of rows with the carriers.”

“Compare “Heart of Darkness,” p.7:”... one evening, I made a speech in English with gestures, not one of which was lost to the sixty pairs of eyes before me.”

“Compare “Heart of Darkness,” pp.71-2:”... the next morning I started the hammock off in front all right.”

“Compare “Heart of Darkness,” p.71: “... he [the white man with him] weighed sixteen stone...”

long halts to rest the carriers. Country wooded in valleys and on many of the ridges.

At 2:30 p.m. reached Luila at last, and camped on right bank. Breeze from S.W.

General direction of march about N.E. Vz E. distance, es^ 16 miles.

Congo very narrow and rapid. Kinzilu rushing in. A short distance up from the mouth, fine waterfall. Sun rose red. From 9 a.m. infernally hot day. Harou very little better. Self rather seedy. Bathed. Luila about 60 feet wide. Shallow.

Friday, 1st of August, 1890. Left at 6:30 a.m. after a very indifferently passed night. Cold, heavy mists. Road in long ascents and sharp dips all the way to Mfumu Mbe. After leaving there, a long and painful climb up a very steep hill; then a long descent to Mfumu Kono, where a long halt was made. Left at 12:30 p.m. towards Nselemba. Many ascents. The aspect of the country entirely changed. Wooded hills with openings. Path almost all the afternoon thro’a forest of light trees with dense undergrowth.

After a halt on a wooded hillside, reached Nselemba at 4:10 p.m. Put up at Gov1 shanty. Row between the carriers and a man, stating himself in gov! employ, about a mat. Blows with sticks raining hard. Stopped it.

Chief came with a youth about 13 suffering from gun-shot wound in the head. Bullet entered about an inch above the right eyebrow, and came out a little inside the roots of the hair, fairly in the middle of the brow in a line with the bridge of the nose. Bone not damaged apparently. Gave him a little glycerine to put on the wound made by the bullet on coming out.

Harou not very well. Mosquitos — frogs — beastly! Glad to see the end of this stupid tramp. Feel rather seedy. Sun rose red. Very hot day. Wind S*.

General direction of march N.E. by N. Distance about 17 miles.1

‘The Journey from Matadi to this point by Stanley Pool took nineteen travelling days. Compare “Heart of Darkness,” p.72: “On the fifteen day I came in sight of the big river [Congo] again and hobbled into the Central Station.”

Joseph Conrad
The Essays of Joseph Conrad
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